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THE

FALL OF ROME,

AND

THE RISE OF THE NEW NATIONALITIES.

A Series of Lectures

ON THE CONNECTION BETWEEN ANCIENT AND MODERN HISTORY.

BY

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"Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht."
SCHILLER.

33080
4/4/94

LONDON
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS, LIMITED
BROADWAY, LUDGATE HILL
MANCHESTER AND NEW YORK
1892

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LONDON:
PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED,
STAMFORD STREET AND CHARING CROSS.

PREFACE.

An important historical work is its own best introduction. This is not the case with books which are about history, rather than history itself. These require some explanation of their purpose and method, for they may deal with a matter in which the reader feels an interest, yet in a manner displeasing to his taste or foreign to his purposes as a student. I shall therefore explain, in as few words as possible, what I have endeavoured to do in these Lectures, and why I have endeavoured to do it.

Our Universities of late have extended their field of historical study, and, whether as a cause or consequence of the fact, the general public has begun to feel an interest in persons and times concerning which it was formerly well content to remain in ignorance.

One of these periods, it has seemed to me, is, or must necessarily very soon be, that critical and cardinal period during which the old-world Civilization broke up, and the new Civilization had its birth. When a man devotes his time and thoughts to any particular subject, he is sure to form large ideas of its importance. Every one exaggerates his own *spécialité;* and this is doubtless the case with myself Yet I cannot but think that most historical students will agree with the remark of a distinguished living historian,—"La dissolution de l'Empire romain d'Occident se rattache

aux origines de l'Europe moderne par le lien logique le plus étroit, celui de la cause à l'effet ; et pourtant qui de nous en sait l'histoire?"* To make a humble contribution to the better understanding of this transitional period is the object of the following pages. I have said a "better understanding," not because I am presumptuous enough to attempt an improvement upon what Gibbon, Hallam, Milman, Stephen, Sismondi, Michelet, Guizot, Thierry, and other illustrious men, have written upon this important era, but because I trust that the ordinary reader, and also the young student, may be induced, by what they find here, to turn to those more formidable because more voluminous pages, and that in this way the knowledge of history may be generally extended. I pretend to no higher office than that of furnishing an introduction to these great names and these great works. But I have attempted to do so in this special way, because experience convinces me that without some attention to detail in dealing with persons and events, persons and events pass away from the memory like the names and dates of a chronological table, and leave behind in the mind no living image of the time. "Les détails sont l'âme de l'histoire."† It has not, therefore, been my ambition to rival or add to the large number of Outlines, Landmarks, Abridgements, Analyses, and other forms of historical *précis*—many of them exceedingly well executed—which are already before the public. I have rather attempted such a combination of narrative, anecdote, and disquisition, as seemed best adapted to create interest, and to convey that sort of information which would induce the student to seek for more. To this the objection may be made, that the method is superficial;

* Amédée Thierry, Récits de l'Histoire Romaine. † *Ibid.*

and on this question Criticism has a fair right to pronounce its judgment without remonstrance on the part of him who adopts the method. Yet I will venture to hope, that what is imperfect is not necessarily superficial. As a matter of simple duty and good faith, I have done my best, by study of the original authorities, when accessible, to avoid that sort of superficiality which mis-states facts and misjudges men, or which builds up theories without examining the ground upon which they rest. To write a learned and profound book, even were I possessed of the ability, I do not enjoy the needful opportunities, and certainly do not make the pretence. But I trust that I may conscientiously ask credit for honesty and industry in my work, so far as it goes. And in reference to the class of persons for whom it is mainly intended, I must declare my conviction that, practically speaking, the alternative is not between profound and superficial knowledge, but between imperfect knowledge and no knowledge at all. If there should be found any critic whose mind is so sternly constituted as to maintain that the latter is the preferable condition of the two, I would remind him how imperfect, after all, is the historical knowledge of the most learned among us, and how needful are small beginnings even for the accomplishment of the greatest results.

There may be an unfavourable judgment of another kind; one which allows the propriety of the plan adopted, but condemns the defects in its execution. Such a judgment I have no right to deprecate or dispute. The excuse sometimes made by members of my own profession, that they have none but spare hours and exhausted energies to bestow upon their task, though painfully true, has never appeared

to me legitimate. It is an excellent excuse for not writing a book at all; it is no excuse for writing a bad one. I shall not, therefore, plead it here; but the fact may, at least, prove thus much: any want of success on my part is no argument against the utility or possibility of the labour I have undertaken. One possessed of leisure and University opportunities may achieve a signal success where an over-tasked schoolmaster, "Parnasso procul et Permesside lymphâ," has signally failed. Few critics, at any rate, will feel so strongly as myself—because few have so long laboured in the same field—that the work which has been here done, might be much better done by many of those who possess the larger facilities for historical study which residence at the Universities confers.*

I am by this reminded to say, though with much diffidence, a few words respecting a matter upon which I have been requested to express an opinion. How far would it be possible to treat the period of History here reviewed as a subject of University study; under what head should such study be classified; and what are the best instruments for its prosecution?

These considerations involve several questions, and among them the much-controverted question as to the limits of Ancient, Mediæval, and Modern History. I must confess myself one of those who do not believe — with a single exception — in the possibility of affixing any such limits at all. When, as Professor Owen tells us, it is impossible to draw the line of exact demarcation between

* It is right to explain that the subject of our own History has been left to a fellow-labourer, whose work appears contemporaneously—"The History of England, by the Rev. James White." Routledge & Co.

the animal and vegetable kingdoms; when no man can accurately separate youth from age, or approximate to a physiological division of human life, is it probable that we shall successfully effect such a division in reference to a subject-matter which exhibits so close an analogy to the life of the individual,—the life, that is to say, of that combination of individuals which we call a "People;" or the aggregate life of all these in common, which forms the history of the world?

One thing is certain: no distinction founded simply upon the processes of time will satisfy the needful conditions of such a division. The Modern cannot be separated from the Ancient simply by a reference to chronology. That which, in itself, or in its direct results, lives on into the Present, belongs to Modern History; that which has perished with the Past belongs to Ancient History, even though of later date than the former. It is, of course, exceedingly difficult to determine what institutions and events have left an operative influence behind them, and what have not,—to point out those which are, so to speak, still visible in their living representatives, and those which have passed away without a memorial or an heir. But the inroads of the Huns and Vandals upon the provinces of the Empire can surely not have the same connection with Modern History as the passage of the Rhine by the Franks, or the settlement of the Saxons in Britain, even though the events may have been nearly contemporaneous. The intrigues of Byzantine eunuchs, and the factions of the Hippodrome, cannot be forced by a rigid synchronism into the same division of History as the rise of Representative institutions. We are still living under arrangements of

Church Government which existed side by side with the executive machinery of Roman imperialism; yet Roman imperialism is a thing of the Past, and Church Government is a living question.

There is assuredly an event which was, in more than one sense, the new birthday of Humanity, and which, therefore, may be said to have terminated Ancient History. But if our prejudices induce us to extend that name beyond the Christian era, then it is impossible to place our finger upon any other event,—as, for instance, the fall of Constantinople, —and to say, "There Ancient or Mediæval History ceases, and Modern History begins."

But, for all practical purposes, I venture to think that such divisions as will suit the requirements of study and teaching, may easily be made. One part of the great World-drama finds, as we have said, its natural conclusion in the coming of Christ, and the contemporaneous birth of the Empire and the Church. The next period, if we take a simply secular view of the subject, is clearly enough defined by the establishment of the Empire of Charlemagne. The stream of history is a metaphor as old as History itself. Following out the same metaphor, we may say, that the waters which had been rushing through a hundred channels and descending from a hundred hills, gathered, in the Empire of Charlemagne, into a single mighty lake, from which, at his death, they burst forth in the great rivers which represent the nationalities of modern Europe.

The next period closes with the Reformation, the Thirty Years' War, and the Peace of Westphalia. The third finds its catastrophe in the French Revolution, and the Fall of Napoleon I. We are living in the fourth. How far these

three last periods can be treated as one single whole,—how far, for instance, they can form a fit subject for the teaching of a single Professorship, — it is not for me dogmatically to pronounce. I will only venture to express a humble opinion that they cannot be satisfactorily so comprised.

With regard to the text-books to be employed in the study of that particular portion of history of which these pages treat, there is nothing which can be placed in comparison with the great work of Gibbon. Subsequent writers have hewn their materials from the gigantic quarry of the Decline and Fall, as the mediæval Romans built their palaces with the stones of the Flavian Amphitheatre. Yet the student of our own age will feel deeply the need of some corrective to the tone of a work which, with all its learning and eloquence, embodies so much of the spirit of another century. The gorgeous magnificence of Gibbon's style is, after all, but the pomp of a funeral procession. It celebrates the obsequies of a dying world; but there is no voice beside the grave to whisper hope beyond, — the hope of another and brighter future for Humanity, when the discords of the old society shall have given place to a principle of unity and universality, which, despite the diversities which agitate its surface, underlies, we earnestly believe, the new society,—the principle of the Fatherhood of the Christian God, and the brotherhood of Christian men. Under this feeling the following pages have been written, and very ample will be my reward if they in any way serve to inspire the young student with the same sentiment. In the mean time let me earnestly exhort him to the study of the original authorities. My own imperfect acquaintance with them

convinces me that much may be gathered from their pages which has escaped Gibbon, or even the best and ablest of his successors, M. Amédée Thierry. Some I have very carefully examined, — Ammianus Marcellinus, Jornandes de rebus Geticis, the Gothic and Vandal Wars of Procopius, Claudian, Prudentius, and, above all, the letters and poems of Sidonius Apollinaris, without a knowledge of which it is not too much to say no one can thoroughly understand the age. There is no reason why these, or some of these, might not be treated as the University treats Livy, Virgil, and Thucydides. The sources from which their information might be supplemented are innumerable. We have the Ecclesiastical historians; we have the Pagan historians, some of which, as, for instance, Zosimus, ought to be read, to gain a view of Society from the Pagan stand-point; the Panegyrists of the Emperors, the Lives of the Saints, Paulus Diaconus on the Lombard annals, Gregory of Tours for those of the Franks,—a monkish Herodotus, without the grace, and it is to be feared, without the veracity, of the old Ionian; Eginhard's Biography of Charlemagne, and all the legendary literature of the Carlovingian period. I have merely mentioned what may, in part at least, be mastered by the ordinary student. He who desires a really sound and scientific knowledge of the era must devote himself to the study of its laws, the Theodosian Code, the Codes of the Ostrogoths and Lombards, the Frank Capitularies, and the Acts of the Council of Toledo.

But on these matters there are others who can speak with an authority to which I have no claim.

London, *January*, 1861.

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THE FALL OF ROME.

"The city which thou seest no other deem,
Than great and glorious Rome."
MILTON, *Paradise Regained.*

"His ego nec metas rerum nec tempora pono;
Imperium sine fine dedi."
VIRGIL, *Æneid*, i. 278.

LECTURE I.

SYNOPSIS.—Importance of the Question as to the connection of Rome with the Modern World.—Opinions of Robertson; of the later French Historians and Sir F. Palgrave.—Connection shown to subsist (i.) From the Roman Language; (ii.) The Roman Law; (iii.) The Municipal System; (iv.) The Imperial Idea; (v.) The Arts of War, Agriculture, &c.; (vi.) Manners, Customs, and Words of Roman Origin.—Conclusion as to the continuity of History from the Era of the Cæsars to our own.—Description of the Geographical Limits of the Empire; its armies; extent of the City; its population; importance of its central site, and the means of communication afforded by the Mediterranean and the Roman Roads.—The World beyond the limits of the Empire.—The Empire itself divided into the two civilizations, Greek and Roman; grave importance of the fact.—The effects of the policy of Diocletian and Constantine.—Results of Constantine's treatment of the Army, adoption of Christianity, and transference of the Seat of Empire.—General Reflections.

No event, perhaps we should rather say no series of events, in the secular history of mankind can equal in interest the fall of the Roman empire. Our minds are overwhelmed by the grandeur of the image which the name of Rome evokes. Through all the mutations of human affairs, and the vicissitudes of what men call Fortune, "Magni stat nominis umbra;" the giant shadow broods over the birth of European civilization, and projects itself far onward into the depths of an unknown future. As to Rome all ancient

history converges, so from Rome all modern history begins. Meanwhile she is to every educated man the source of a sentiment which, like the master passions of the human mind, transcends the power of external expression. Her world-wide glory; her ten centuries of dominion; her colossal monuments; the mighty work she has done in the mission of civilization; the pervading, and in many cases permanent influence exercised by her language, her laws, her institutions, and her arms, are more than the imagination can compass, or the intellect satisfactorily classify and comprehend. And as we reflect that this long domination and widely-extended rule, the victories of this wise policy and this conquering sword, are now numbered among the things that have been, and that we can only trace at second hand the operation of their influences upon other institutions and among other races of men,—the dream of perished grandeur, which so haunts the fancy of the poet, becomes the gravest lesson which the history of humanity can teach to the moralist and the statesman.

Our present purpose, however, demands that we should deal with something more than the poetic and sentimental aspects of the subject. We mean to speak of Rome as she is connected with modern life, not as a thesis for the burning eloquence of Corinne upon the Capitol. Here, therefore, we are at once met by the question,—"May we not be deceiving ourselves?" Is there any ground for assuming such a connection between the spirit of Rome and the life of the modern world, as to warrant our regarding them in combination? If the answer, in our own country at any rate, were derived from first impulses and common notions, it would in all probability be in the negative. The popular mind depicts to itself a wild "Hourra!" of the northern nations upon Italy, followed by the obsequies of the imperial mistress of the world, like those of Sardanapalus or the Carthaginian queen. A royal form reposes

upon a funeral pyre, high-heaped with the wealth of its household and its realm; a savage crowd surround the spot with shouts of barbarian triumph, burning torches, and brandished swords; and as the devouring flame becomes more strong, it sweeps away into annihilation all, save a few sad memories, which once attached to the Monarch of world-wide fame and power. This view has perhaps been encouraged by our historical writers, who have been over anxious to claim a Teutonic, and therefore national parentage, for the main developments of modern civilization. Robertson, who was long the leading authority, writes:—"Very faint vestiges of the Roman policy, jurisprudence, arts, or literature remained. New forms of government, new laws, new manners, new dresses, new languages, and new names of men and countries were everywhere introduced."* And elsewhere he speaks in the same way. The sonorous periods in which he pours his barbarians over Europe, and sweeps away the last remnants of Roman civilization with fire and steel, are among our earlier historical recollections.

Now it need not be said that a strong reaction against these opinions has arisen among late continental historians, and especially those of the French school. Children of the Romaic races, they see traces of Rome in all around them; her influence they believe to have been paramount in the institutions and forms of social life which succeeded the fall of the empire; and they regard the inroad of the German nationalities and the German spirit as an interruption, rather than as a serious alteration in the course of imperial civilization.

But of all who advocate this view, our own learned and eloquent Palgrave has approached the topic with the greatest "schwärmerei," as it is called by our German neighbours—a word very inadequately translated by "enthusiasm." In his

* Introduction to Charles V., i. § 1.

estimation Rome is all in all. The barbaric sovereignties, the whole character of modern monarchical institutions, the policy of the European commonwealths, the titles, badges, dignities, and functions of nobility, the mediæval serfdom or villainage, the forms of national jurisprudence, municipalities, corporations, and guilds, great councils and parliaments, romance and chivalry, architecture and arts, nay, even the very name and form of feudality itself, are derived from Roman sources, and form part of the great legacy bequeathed, at least potentially, by the Empire to mankind.

It is undesirable to accept either theory in its extreme form. Here, as elsewhere, a sober judgment will adopt a middle course. Modern society is composed of two elements; its civilization owns a double parentage. The Teuton and the Latin have each contributed to make it what it is; and the duty of exactly assigning to either the limit of the influence which he has exercised upon us, or of our own obligations to him, is a most delicate and difficult one. This cannot be fully attempted here. Our task will be rather to consider briefly the Roman element, for it is that which is most prominent during the early ages, of which we are about to treat, and which, as we have said, our own writers have been inclined to depreciate and forget.

In the first place, Robertson's remark about the disappearance of the Roman language must, I think, strike us as very untenable. Scientific and comparative philology had not in his day been cultivated with the same success as at present. Still he might have known that we can trace to a Latin origin something like three-fourths of the most widely-spoken language in Europe; French, it has been well said, is "Latin squeezed."* Compare, for instance, the first linguistic monument where the process of transition

* "How to Speak French." A little work by M. Albites, of Birmingham, which on this, as on many other subjects, contains an immense amount of information in a very few words.

may be traced, the oath which the two sons of Louis I. took to each other in A.D. 842:

> "Pro Deo amur, et pro Christian poplo, et nostro commun salvament
> Pour Dieu amour, et pour Chrétien peuple, et notre commun salut."

The same may be said of the Italian, the Spanish, the Portuguese, and of the less-known Rhætian and Wallachian dialects. They have never entirely repudiated their origin: Dante regarded Virgil as a fellow-countryman. The mediæval dialects, which form the substratum of the modern French, still described themselves as the Romance or Roman tongue. In most cases a few simple rules enable the student to detect the old Latin word beneath its modern corruption, and any intelligent man, who really understands the original, has already more than half mastered these latter deflections from its type.

Again, as a simple matter of fact, Robertson must have known that Latin for many centuries constituted almost the sole written language of the civilized world, and was spoken by all educated men and women, from Constantinople to the Scottish hills. For many centuries it was the only medium through which theology, history, poetry, science, and art conveyed their teaching to the world, and it has graven its impress upon them all. We are inclined to forget that even the *Novum Organon* and the *Principia* were first given to the world through the medium of the language in which Cæsar's war-cry sounded on the shores of Kent. When I say we are inclined to forget it, I mean those who only take a popular and superficial view of the matter. His nomenclature, and the history and literature of his own special subject, will not suffer the scholar or the man of learning to forget it. He encounters traces of the Latin influence at every turn. Indeed he is often beneath this influence when he knows it not. It is the case with us all. The Roman

spirit has extended its ramifications so widely, and in such subtle shapes, that it reappears at times when we are wholly unconscious of its existence. "Nous avons en nous je ne sais combien d'idées, de sentiments antiques, dont nous ne nous rendrons pas compte,"* says a great French writer of our own times; and most men who have read history in the true historical spirit, will echo the remark.

There is, however, one evidence of the permanence of the Latin tongue, palpable even to the common mind. Wherever the gorgeous ritual of the Church of Rome feasts the eyes of the multitude who, in Europe or the new world, crowd her spacious cathedrals, the grand old tongue of Italy, "the voice of Empire and of War," to them the voice of Salvation and of Faith, rolls its sonorous accents in their ear. Whatever we may think of the practice, the fact remains. It is impossible to speak in the tone of Robertson respecting the disappearance of a language which for eighteen centuries has gone up in the prayers of half Christendom to heaven.

But besides her language Rome has also left to modern society her law. The Roman law has afforded a basis to half the existing codes of Europe, and has materially modified the rest. On this subject the great work of course is that of Savigny, which was written to prove that the Roman law has never become entirely obsolete, but maintained a strange vitality from the fifth to the thirteenth century, reappearing in a multitude of laws, institutions, and customs.

Learned men do not accept all the conclusions of the celebrated German jurist, but I think (speaking from the superficial and second-hand acquaintance with his theory which is all that I can boast) that he has, in the main, facts and the truth upon his side. No one, at least, will dispute the influence, for instance, of the Roman law upon the Visigoth legislation in Spain, modelled as was the latter upon the laws of Theodosius; of the Pandects of Justinian upon the

* Michelet, "Discours d'Ouverture," 1834.

Etablissemens of St. Louis; of the jurists of the Empire upon the whole fabric of the jurisprudence of Germany, the Prussian Landrechts, the Gesetzbuch of Austria; and, again, not only on the famous Code Napoléon, but on the principles of the Scottish law, and our own maritime and ecclesiastical codes. Hallam, in speaking of the Justinian code, condemns the too hasty supposition that it was ever entirely unknown in the West: "Some of the more eminent ecclesiastics, as Hincmar and Ivon of Chartres, occasionally refer to it, and bear witness to the regard which the Roman Church had uniformly paid to its decisions."*

Justinian's system was taught publicly in Italy early in the twelfth century, at the university of Bologna; but the most active impulse was given to the study by the discovery of a copy of the Pandects at Amalfi, in 1135 A.D., upon the capture of that city by the Pisans. Within fifty years Italy, we are told, was full of lawyers, and distinguished schools arose at Modena, Mantua, Padua, and Naples. It was the same in other countries. Montpellier and Toulouse were distinguished for their eminent masters. We know that the Roman law was taught in Oxford by a Bolognese in the reign of Stephen, though it encountered there an opposition, which may explain the modified, yet positive, influence which it has exercised among ourselves.† Hallam observes that he should earn but little gratitude for dwelling with obscure diligence upon a subject which attracts so few. This would be still more the case with ourselves. Let us therefore remain satisfied with Hallam's own remarks, applied directly to our own country, yet perhaps still more applicable to those of others. "Everywhere the clergy combined its study with that of their own canons; it was a maxim that every canonist must be a civilian, and that no one could be a good civilian unless he were also a

* Hallam, "Middle Ages," vol. iii. p. 413.
† *See* Hallam's remarks on Selden, vol. iii. p. 416.

canonist. In all universities degrees, are granted in both laws conjointly; and in all courts of ecclesiastical jurisdiction the authority of Justinian is cited when that of Gregory of Clement is wanting."*

To language and literature we must add the municipal spirit, and the type of municipal institutions, as another heir-loom inherited from Rome. The great writer† to whom we have already referred, traces the continuance of municipal institutions in certain French cities from the fall of the empire to the twelfth century, in which we first hear of communities with formal charters. The subject has been taken up by Raynouard, Thierry, and other distinguished men, among whom some doubt prevails as to matters of detail, and the limitations under which any such assertion as that of Savigny may be made. Few, however, will gainsay the statement of Guizot, that ancient Roman civilization has bequeathed the municipal system to modern Europe; in an inferior, indeed, very irregular and much weakened, but nevertheless in the only real, the only constituted system which has outlived the Roman world.

The little attention I have been able to bestow upon the subject convinces me further of the truth of another remark of the same able and learned man: "Between the municipal system of the Romans and that of the middle ages the municipal-ecclesiastic system interposed."‡ It will be necessary hereafter to speak more minutely upon the nature of this interposing link and of the system itself; at present we are only concerned with the fact that in the municipal form ancient civilization began, and in the same it closed. The first object which meets the eye amid the twilight in which the history of the West is born, is the city; the last which rises above the *débris* of the empire, is the city also. It never entirely fades from view. Other elements, doubt-

* Vol. iii. ch. 9, pt. 2. † Savigny, *ut supra.*
‡ Guizot, "Lectures on European Civilization," ii.

less, entered into the constitution of the municipal communities of the middle ages, the free cities of Germany, the great towns of France and Flanders, and the boroughs of England. This has been conclusively shown by Thierry, in reference to certain communes in the north of France, whose origin he ascribes to the Teutonic institution of guilds, which were voluntary associations of a fraternal character among persons of the same trade, who engaged to assist one another in person and purse, and ratified their combination by some secret ceremonial of a religious character. But even these, directly or indirectly, in all probability owed somewhat to the example or influence of the great towns south of the Loire,—Perigeux, Bourges, Arles, Nismes, Marseilles, Toulouse, and Narbonne, which had never entirely lost the type of Roman institutions, and which still retained the Roman spirit. On the northern bank of the great central river of France it is not so easy to discern the same thing; though Raynouard adds Paris, Rheims, and Metz to the class. At any rate, the great Roman-Frankish city of Cologne is a conspicuous example. Historians discover others, subject to more or less controversy, in the different countries of Europe; in the cities of Italy, which retained a civil government under the Ostrogoth, and even under the Lombard yoke; in the free towns of Flanders and Holland, whose self-government goes back beyond any assignable date, and in consequence connects itself with the period of Roman domination; in the legally incorporated communities of Spain, such as that of Leon, in 1020, whose charter, granted by King Alphonso V., makes mention of its common council as an established institution; and even in those cities and towns of England, which Lyttelton declares were "bodies corporate and communities long before the alteration introduced into France by the charters of Louis le Gros." *

It is impossible at any rate to deny a species of affiliation

* Hallam, "Middle Ages," vol. i. p. 435.

between the old Italian muncipalities and the Lombard republics. It coloured their character throughout the middle ages; and even at the present moment, it is argued by a writer in the *Times*, that the relics of the old municipal form and spirit confer upon the cities of Central Italy a power of self-government which has preserved them from anarchy under the terrible trial to which they have been lately subjected.

Another great idea inherited from Rome has prevented the entire severance of historic unity between ancient and modern life, and transmitted an inspiration from the first to the second, which has come vividly forth in the working of the States-system of Europe. That idea is the idea of Empire, of centralized authority. The majesty of the Roman name did not pass away with the presence of Roman power. The imperial Image which haunted the Seven Hills still awed the imaginations of men. Rome herself was still the

> "Gran Latina
> Città, di cui quanto il sol aureo gira
> Ne altera più, ne più onorata mira."

The rude multitudes who poured over the Rhine and the Alps could not shake themselves free from the spell which had once been strong enough to charm or to coerce the world. They still paid an unconscious homage to the idea long after the reality had departed; and the idea, reacting upon their minds, produced for itself new and vigorous developments.

"The name of the Empire," says Guizot, "the recollection of that great and glorious society, disturbed the memories of men, particularly of the senators of towns, of bishops, priests, and all those who had their origin in the Roman world. Among the barbarians themselves, or their barbaric ancestors, many had been witnesses of the grandeur of the empire: they had served in its armies; they had conquered it. The image and name of Roman civilization had an imposing

influence upon them, and they experienced the desire of imitating, of reproducing, of preserving something of it." * Hence an intolerance of their native barbarism, and the isolation which was its predominant characteristic; a tendency to combine and cohere, a longing for some form of centralized power. Perhaps to this we owe in great measure the consolidation of our modern nationalities under circumstances and influences very unfavourable to unity. Hence, too, the idea of a common Christendom inspiring the Crusades, and not unknown to the dreams of later statesmen,—witness the well-known project of a Christian commonwealth in the brain of the great Bearnais, which the dagger of Ravillac cut short. And doubtless the same idea, briefly and imperfectly realized by Charlemagne, was underlying the ambitious visions of popes and emperors, and gave to both Guelph and Ghibelline whatever real strength and vitality their respective principles possessed.

"The conquests of Charlemagne and his predecessors," writes Professor Vaughan, "enforced a political organization, which carried some elements of Roman society into the heart of Germany. They left behind them the idea of the Roman emperor, which should one day grow to maturity, strike its roots from the German into the Italian soil, and so draw from under the very palaces of the Cæsars a Roman principle of life to circulate through all its prerogatives, and to be exhaled through all its functions into the German atmosphere." †

French ambition has ever clung to the same phantom: witness Francis I., Louis XIV., Napoleon the Great; French expeditions beyond the Alps; French occupations of the Capitol; French "Kings of Rome;" the coronation of French emperors by Italian pontiffs at Notre Dame; the bloody fields of Magenta and Solferino; the annexation of

* Guizot, Lecture ii.

† Vaughan, Introductory Lecture, p. 18.

Italian Nice; the bayonets which bristle round the ruined palaces of the Cæsars, and occupy the approaches to the Vatican. Yet the German still guards, though no longer in a Lombard fortress, the iron Crown: no stipulation was more sternly contested in that secret chamber at Villafranca; and those who in "the '48" listened to the debates in the Paulkirche at Frankfort, know how, despite the most unfavourable circumstances, the traditions of the Kaisers hang round the place of their birth, and linger in the popular mind, though neither Hapsburg nor Hohenzollern can give them life.

The Romans again have taught us the art of war; a strange assertion it may seem to those who deem that war depends on gunpowder. But Dr. Arnold has shown, upon the authority of Napoleon I., that the tactics and campaigns of the ancient generals are as well worth the study of military men as those of Marlborough and Turenne. And the name of Teacher may fairly be claimed by the earliest professors of the art, if their practice still continues to supply matter of interest and instruction to ourselves.

"I assume," says Mr. Long, "that modern military science is to be derived from the Romans. Some of our own countrymen have had a high opinion of them in this line, as Lieutenant Clarke's sensible preface to his edition of Vegetius shows. And Captain John Bingham, in his Translation (1616) of Ælian's 'Tactic of the Greeks,' says: 'Ælian hath in a small volume so expressed the arts, that nothing is more short, nothing more linked together in coherence of precepts, and yet distinguished by such variety that all motions requisite or to be used in a battle are fully expressed therein.' Roesch, who gave lectures on the military art, says that among all the ancient and modern military histories, he knows of none he found better adapted for lectures on Strategy than the 'Commentarii.'" *

* Preface to Cæsar's Commentaries.

You will probably indorse this opinion of Mr. Long; nor will you refuse your assent to another remark of the same gentleman, though our space will not permit its verification. "The Romans have also taught us a great deal about civil administration, and about roads, canals, aqueducts, and draining; to which we may add farming, both the cultivation of land and the management of stock."

These are the great influences, material, moral, and intellectual, which may be traced back through the confusion of mediæval Europe to imperial Rome. But independent of these, there are to be found among nearly all European nations a crowd of ideas, superstitions, practices, traditional notions and customs, all springing more or less from the Roman element in their social constitution, which interpenetrate their daily life, and mingle with their common habits of thought. That excellent work, "The Popular History of England," illustrates this so admirably in our own case, that I shall make no apology for quoting its words.

"The customs of a nation, and whatever relates to its common life, furnish as enduring traces of what has gone before as its laws and its language. There cannot be a more striking example of the blending of Roman and Teutonic modes of thought than is furnished by the names of our months and of our weeks. January presents itself under the influence of the 'Two-faced Janus;' March is the month of Mars; July keeps to the memory of the mighty Julius; and August claims an annual reverence for the crafty spirit of Augustus. It was in vain that the Saxons would have superseded these popular titles by their *wolf-monat* for January; and their *lenet-monat* (lengthening month) for March. In vain would they have made Cæsar and Octavius yield to their 'hay-month' and their 'barn-month.' And yet they have put their perpetual stamp upon our week days. The Saxon Woden set his mark upon Wednesday, and banished the *Dies Mercurii;* Thor, the

Saxon thunderer, was too mighty for the Roman Jupiter, who yielded up his *Dies Jovis;* and that endearing wife of Woden, the Saxon Frea, dispossessed the Roman goddess of love of her *Dies Veneris.* But the Saxons have not obliterated more trifling things. Many traditionary customs and superstitions which have come down to us from the Roman period, still bear testimony to the Roman influence. Our parochial perambulations are the ancient Terminalia; our May-day is the festival of Flora. Our marriage ceremonies are all Roman: the ring, the veil, the wedding gifts, the groomsmen and bridesmaids, the bride-cake. Our funeral images and customs are Roman: the cypress and the yew, the flowers strewn upon graves, the black for mourning. The lucky days of a century ago were the *dies albi* of the Romans, and the unlucky the *dies atri.* If we ask why we say 'God bless you' to the sneezer, we only ask a question which Pliny asked, and perform a ceremony which the stern Tiberius thought it necessary to perform. If we laugh at the credulous fancy of the simple maiden, who, when her ears tingle, says that a distant one is talking of her, we should recollect that the Romans believed in some influence of a mesmeric nature which produced the same effect. We have faith in odd numbers, as Virgil records the faith, *numero Deus impare gaudet.* 'A screech owl at midnight,' says Addison, 'has alarmed a family more than a band of robbers.' The terror was traditionary. 'The bird of night' was ever an evil bird; and no Roman superstition entered more completely into the popular belief, and was more referred to by the historians and poets. Indications such as these of the influences of the obscure past may be as trustworthy records as half-obliterated inscriptions. They enable us to piece out a passage or two in the history of a people."*

Finally, speaking of the death of the Roman empire,

* Knight's "Popular History of England," vol. i. ch. 3.

one fact must always be remembered—a fact insisted upon by Guizot, and emphatically repeated by Sir Francis Palgrave. Rome herself never died. She never entirely passed into the hands of her enemies, or witnessed a permanent barbarian occupation. A hundred times on the verge of annihilation she was never annihilated. A remnant always remained to restore the name of Rome, and keep alive the tradition of the eternal city, even when Alaric or Genseric had seemed to trample her very ruins into dust. "Such is eminently the case," writes Sir F. Palgrave, "with that due conception of the eternal city's destiny, which the illustrious historical investigator, now the honour and the reproach of France, has presented with equal modesty and emphasis. Rome never was permanently conquered,—never accepted the stranger's yoke,—never became subjected to the barbarian. Rome alone continued purely Roman after the imperial presence departed; province after province was lost; plague, pestilence, and fire desolated the city; the inhabitants shrunk away within the walls; a fierce and corrupt aristocracy, a depraved and cowardly populace, composed the community which defiled the Seven Hills; but the succession was unbroken, and Rome was Rome, and is Rome still." The fact is a very remarkable one, and must assuredly have exercised a palpable influence over the mediæval world. At present, however, we must recur to the Rome of the Empire, before a barbarian standard had crossed the Alps, or a conception of their coming fate had flashed upon the minds of her rulers or her people.

Thus far I have dwelt upon facts which must, I think, convince the historical student at least of this truth. History is unintelligible to those who do not read it in its natural continuity, and between the era of the Cæsars and the 19th century, no epoch, no point of time, can be discovered, at which it is possible to say, "Here this continuity breaks off." I am therefore convinced, with many of the dis-

tinguished men who have of late years written history, that to know our modern selves we must know Rome. In her soil are deeply fixed the roots of modern society. The tree may tower on high, spread forth its thousand branches, and wave its multitudinous leaves in the light of day; but he who would estimate its nature and strength, must seek deep in earth and darkness for the source of its vital power. I do not say the analogy is an exact one, but modern history has its birth in the death of the Roman empire, and we must recur to that gloomy period if we would understand its real character. The Roman empire, therefore, I shall endeavour to lay before you, and explain not only its external development, but the social conditions out of which arose its decay.

I shall first speak more especially of the period between the consolidation of supreme power in the hands of Augustus and the accession of Diocletian, who imparted a more artificial character to the imperial policy, and introduced that elaborate but impotent administrative system which fell before the vigorous inroad of the nations of the North; and, in conclusion, I shall briefly notice the shape which this policy assumed in the hands of Constantine the Great, and that crisis in the constitution of the empire to which his measures gave birth.

Place before you a map of the ancient hemisphere: exclude from your consideration the northern and north-eastern portion of Europe, beyond the mouths of the Rhine and Danube; the whole of Africa south of the Great Desert, and the 10th degree of north latitude; and Asia, west of the Caspian Sea and the great Mesopotamian rivers. What strikes you as the central point in this vast portion of the earth's surface? It nearly coincides with the site of Rome. And this fact is of immense importance. From her local position alone Rome was fitted to be the capital of the ancient world. The pulse of civilized life radiated from and returned to that great centre, which could not

have been elsewhere placed without a serious derangement of the vital energy of the whole body, and the activity of the limbs. I shall be reminded of this again when, after having considered the geographical limits of the empire of Rome, we come to see how her peculiar situation enabled her to extend the executive of a centralized administration to the extreme limits of her territory, with rapidity and ease. At present, let us observe how the whole area of the known world might, at this period, have been classified under a triple division. First was the Roman empire, known, civilized, carefully organized, and governed by Roman officers, receiving almost daily direction from the great central authority on the banks of the Tiber. Then there was the Barbarian world, imperfectly explored, stretching far away into unknown wildernesses of morass and forest, inhabited by savage tribes of many distinct races, with crude forms of political government, or living in the semi-lawlessness of nomad and patriarchal life. Between the two was a crowd of half-independent Chieftaincies, or so-called Monarchies, allies or subjects of the "Roman people"—a world neither barbarous nor civilized, but dwelling in a moral and intellectual twilight, which darkened into shadow or brightened into day as it receded from or approached the great central luminary of Rome. The supposed limits of the Empire have been given by Gibbon; but it is needless to repeat the well-known passage, more especially as we shall attempt a brief outline of our own.

Of what was this immense superficial area made up? I must still refer you to Gibbon for particulars; a general sketch may perhaps be sufficient for our present object. The Atlantic Ocean, with its bays and channels, as it sweeps round from the foot of the Cimbric peninsula to the Straits of Gibraltar, and southward again towards the Canary Islands, may be regarded as the real northern and western boundary of the Empire. On the other side of the sea

which washes the north of Gaul, the Roman had indeed seized with a late grasp, and precariously retained the province of Britain. The rampart of Hadrian and Severus, extending from the Solway to the Tyne, may be regarded as the real limit of Romanized Britain. A more ambitious attempt was made to extend this limit to another rampart, called the Wall of Antonine, stretching from the Frith of Forth to the estuary of the Clyde; but the inroads of the free Caledonian mountaineers rendered Roman authority very equivocal in this debatable ground, the scene of so much bloodshed in after-days. Here, at any rate, the Roman placed the last limits of the civilized world. Indeed, we may doubt whether he for a long time allowed that Britain was within its boundaries. Horace speaks of the inhabitants as "the most remote of human beings." Virgil calls them "a race divided from all the world." Catullus holds it to be the strongest proof of fidelity in friendship that Furius and Aurelius are ready to accompany him, "even unto the horrid Britons, last of men." An ancient historian tells his readers, with the *naïveté* of supreme ignorance, that "the world of the Britons is as large as our own." However these things may be, it is certain, from his own account, that Julius obtained a very insecure footing in the island. Superstitious motives induced Claudius to annex it as a province, in direct contradiction to the avowed policy of Augustus. It was ably administered by Agricola for Domitian; it subsequently saw the death, birth, and accession of heirs to the imperial purple; but the revolts of Caractacus, Boadicea, and Carausius witness to the fact that the spirit of independence was never entirely subdued. The government of Agricola was perhaps the period of its most entire submission, and greatest material prosperity; yet, of the British of Agricola's time, Tacitus could write the prophetic words,—"The Roman sword had tamed them to submission, but not to

slavery." We are not, therefore, wrong in limiting the real Roman empire by the Straits of Dover and the coasts of Gaul—Gaul which was so indisputably her own.

Returning to Africa, we find the boundary indicated by a somewhat indefinite line, drawn across the whole continent from west to east. Where no antagonism to the Roman arms, save that of climate and the character of the country, was to be encountered, the actual demarcation was not very positively drawn. The Atlas, and the great African desert on the western side, the cataracts of the Nile, and the confines of Arabia on the eastern, may be considered, despite the declamation of Virgil, as the goals of Roman conquest towards the south. On the east lay the Parthian empire. The vacillations of long warfare frequently changed the frontiers in this direction; but we may loosely place them at the Euphrates, the Tigris, the Armenian mountains, and the Euxine Sea. Gibbon says, perhaps with more precision, that Syria formed the eastern frontier of the empire, and that this province, in its utmost latitude, knew no other bounds than the mountains of Cappadocia to the north, and towards the south, the confines of Egypt and the Red Sea. On the north-east, at any rate, the Pontus presented an impassable barrier, alike to Roman victories and barbarian inroads. An imaginary line drawn through it from the spurs of the Caucasus to the mouths of the Danube, and afterwards produced along the course of the Danube itself, may be regarded as bounding the Empire on this side; but between the Danube and the Rhine lay the vulnerable heel of this Achilles—the weak point of the Empire. Towards the apex of the vast triangle, of which these rivers formed as it were two sides, crowded, wave after wave, the foes of Rome. Even at a very early period she held her own with difficulty against the German tribes. The difficulty increased from year to year, until the emperor Probus constructed a gigantic rampart wall, which, commencing at Ratisbon, on the Danube,

passed for two hundred miles, with true Roman perseverance, over hill, valley, river, and morass, until it finally touched the Rhine. The remains of this vast work, known as "The Devil's Wall," still move the traveller's wonder and the superstition of the Suabian peasant; but "the experience of the world," says Gibbon, "from China to Britain, has exposed the vain attempt at fortifying any extensive tract of country." Hardly had Probus died, before the Alemanni burst through the barrier he had raised, and left nothing but its ruins to attest the insecurity of states which are protected by no better bulwark than those of wood and stone. A stronger and more permanent line of defence was formed by the great river whose banks the wall of Probus reached. The Rhine was a Roman intrenchment, and Gaul a vast *place d'armes.* Among the thousand associations which crowd upon the mind when we gaze upon that historic stream, as it comes down broad and rushing from the bosom of the Alps, none is more moving than the thought that we have before us the bulwark of the old free life of the Germanic world, beyond which the demoralization and slavery of the toga could never permanently pass. The raids of Cæsar and Germanicus acquired no lasting dominion in a land defended by the sword of Arminius, and even the disciplined valour of the legionary and the imperial name of Rome, produced but little effect upon the swift-footed and fierce barbarians who vanished before the eagles into the morasses which girt the Rhine, the shifting quicksands of the Northern Ocean, or the gloomy and impenetrable depths of the Hercynian forest.

Such were the geographical limits of the Roman Empire; within them lay, in the time of Augustus, and according to his organization, nineteen provinces, each of which might have well been a royal realm. About the end of Nero's reign they were subjected to a new arrangement, and increased in number to thirty-five. No mere recapitu-

lation such as a lecturer can give, will suffice for those who are desirous of accurately studying this portion of the subject. I will, however, briefly place before you such an enumeration, as may enable those who have the advantage of a good map, to acquire a more definite idea than mere words can give of Roman grandeur and dominion. Remember, however, that the policy of Augustus introduced a distinction between the provinces, which had no slight effect in consolidating and maintaining the imperial authority. The frontier provinces, whose situation required the presence of powerful armies, he retained under his sole and direct control. These he called Provinciæ Imperatoriæ, and he adminstered their affairs by military officers styled Proprætors, and Legati Cæsaris or Augusti. Their revenue was collected by procurators and paid into the fiscus, or imperial privy purse. The Provinciæ Senatoriæ, on the contrary, were those whose long-established tranquillity and ascertained allegiance demanded no troops beyond the few who fulfilled the purposes of a police. They were governed by proconsuls, whose appointment was only for a single year; and their taxes were collected by a quæstor, who paid them into the Ærarium, or public treasury, nominally managed by the senate. We may easily imagine that under an arbitrary emperor, there was little practical difference in the nature of the authority exercised in an imperial or senatorial province. In the first instance it may have been otherwise, and we cannot but admire the subtle policy of Augustus, who in professing to select for himself the scene of difficulty and peril, really acquired the solid elements of power.

The whole Empire then in Nero's time consisted of thirty-eight provinces. Six of them had already been united to the Republic in the sixth century of its existence—Sardinia, Sicily, Corsica, Illyria, and the two Spanish provinces of Bætica and Tarraconensis. Before the battle of Actium,

fourteen others had been added to the list; two African districts, Achaia, Asia Minor, Macedonia, Narbonnese Gaul, Cyrenaica and Crete, Cilicia, Cyprus, Bithynia, Syria, Aquitania, Belgic and Celtic Gaul. The government of Augustus made ten others, Egypt, Lusitania, Numidia, Galatia, the Maritime Alps, Noricum, Vindelicia, Rhætia, Pannonia, and Mœsia. Tiberius increased the empire by a single province only, that of Cappadocia. The vainglorious Claudius incorporated the two Mauritanias, Lycia, Judæa, Thrace, and Britain. Pontus, under Nero, closes the list. Of these countries many still retain their original name with a slight variation; these require no further explanation. Noricum, Rhætia, and Vindelicia comprised part of Bavaria, the duchy of Austria, Styria, the Tyrol, and the country of the Grisons. Pannonia was nearly equivalent to trans-Danubian Hungary. Illyria and Dalmatia may be discovered by their modern appellations. But Gaul was much more extensive than modern France; it included Belgium and in part Holland, the Rhenish provinces of Prussia, and all Switzerland, except the Grisons. Achaia, from the predominance for a short time asserted by the Achæan league, was the name under which the Romans annexed Greece and the Ionian Isles. Macedonia, Mœsia, and Thrace are now the European provinces of Turkey beneath the Danube; Turkey in Asia includes the rest. Of these provinces Sicily, Sardinia, Narbonnese Gaul, Bætica or Southern Spain, Macedonia, Achaia, Crete, Proconsular Asia, Bithynia, Paphlagonia, Pontus, were considered beyond the danger of insurrection, and consigned to the peaceful keeping of the Senate.

Augustus guarded and managed these immense regions with an armed force, which to modern ideas appears strangely disproportionate. The European governments which occupy the same area, employ in their fleets and land forces, according to the most moderate computation, something like four million of armed men. In the first year of the empire we

find mention of but twenty-five legions and fourteen cohorts. If we compute the legion at 6,300, and the cohort at 600, or perhaps 610 (excepting those of the garrison of Rome, which contained 1,000), we reach a grand total of 171,500 men. It is, of course, easy to understand many of the reasons which swell the modern total and could not have influenced this; still the contrast is a startling one. We must however add to the Roman aggregate the maritime forces under arms at the same time. These were not very considerable. Two prætorian fleets, one stationed at Ravenna, the other at Misenum, patrolled the Mediterranean; they were each manned by a legion of mariners, about 6,000 fighting men. An auxiliary fleet (vicaria) from Frejus protected the coasts of Southern Gaul; a second performed the same office for those of the Euxine Sea. They consisted—certainly the latter did—of forty vessels; we may assign half a legion to each. Beside these, two flotillas (fluviatiles) passed perpetually backwards and forwards on the two great frontier rivers of the empire, the Danube and the Rhine. In each were twenty-four galleys, and we may suppose that together they employed 3,000 men. Here then we have an additional item of 21,000, which, added to the foregoing, brings the sums up to 191,000. But Tacitus* intimates that the auxiliary troops furnished by friendly monarchs and nationalities were about equal in number to the legionaries. These have been computed at 171,500; therefore the grand aggregate of the armed forces of the Empire under Augustus may be stated at 362,500 men. Nero made additions, which raised it to 391,100, and if we may credit the accounts given to us, the legionaries alone of Marcus Aurelius amounted to 258,258; but if this was the case, that number was probably obtained by the incorporation of numerous auxiliaries.

* Ann. iv. 5.

I have been thus particular, because it is an interesting and instructive fact, that the world could be governed by an amount of physical force less formidable than that which the mutual jealousy of modern states compels them severally to maintain.*

In the midst of all these wide-spread dominions, the imperial City sat serenely upon her throne of seven hills, ordering and enforcing obedience by the mere terror of her traditions and the inviolate dignity of her name. It would require not only unlimited artistic skill, but an unlimited breadth of canvas, to delineate a picture of this Queen of cities, her wealth, her splendour, and her extent, as she appeared to the eyes of those who witnessed the apogee of her power.

> "All that which Ægypt whilome did devise,
> All that which Greece their temples to embrave,
> After the Ionicke, Atticke, Doricke guise,
> Or Corinth, skill'd in curious works to grave;
> All that Lysippus practique art could form,
> Apelles' wit, or Phidias his skill,
> Was wont this ancient Citie to adorn,
> And the heaven itself with her wide wonders fill;
> All that which Athens ever brought forth wise,
> All that which Africke ever brought forth strange,
> All that which Asia ever had of prise,
> Was here to see!"

I entertain no such ambitious project. Who would willingly vie with the crowd of rhetoricians, poets, and panegyrists, who have exhausted their ingenuity and eloquence upon the theme? "Rome, loveliest of created things," exclaims Virgil, in a burst of patriotic enthusiasm. "Rome, city of the world, capital of the nations," writes the rhetorician Aristides.† "City of cities," "Epitome of the Universe," are the titles conferred by contemporaries. "The

* For an estimate of the armies of modern Europe, see the work of Count Franz de Champagny, "Les Césars," vol. ii. Appendix i. It has apparently been borrowed by Mr. White, in his "Eighteen Christian Centuries."

† Aristides Rhetor, "De Urbe Româ."

spreading houses," says Pliny, "have added many new cities to the older one." "It is impossible to say," Dionysius of Halicarnassus tells us, "where the city terminates and the country begins! both are so intertwined together that they present the aspect of a city without bounds." In fact, it contained many cities; there was a Scythian, a Cappadocian, a Jewish quarter. So numerous were the latter people, that Josephus speaks of a deputation, as we should call it, of some 8,000, who waited with a petition upon Augustus. An immense number of foreign nations (*exterarum gentium multitudo*)* surrounded the funeral pyre of the great Dictator who had thrown open to them the Capital, lamenting him each in their own fashion. Distinguished amongst the rest were the Jews, who passed several continuous nights by the corpse.

What then was the extent of ground really covered by this colossal city? what the number of the multitude within its circumference? The earliest legends point to a village on the Capitol, then known by the appellation of Mons Saturnius; the tradition recorded by Virgil, and Ovid tells of another founded by the Arcadian Evander; between them lay what afterwards became the Forum Romanum. This was the central cradle of the race; the nucleus of that mighty wilderness of building which afterwards assumed the appearance of a world. The progress of Rome was rapid during the Republic; during the Empire it became portentous. The city soon climbed to the summits of the five remaining hills, and, descending their sides, filled the intermediate spaces with piles of masonry raised so high that one story, says Cicero, toppled over another, and seemed to be suspended in the air. She descended to the Tiber, and stretched herself like some great monster along its banks, crowning with roofs the Janiculum, and then the Vatican hill, northward to the

* Suetonius, C. Jul. Cæsar, 84.

Milvian bridge, and to the south in the direction of the great port which connected her with the Mediterranean and the outer world. In other directions it was the same. Toward Tiber and Præneste, she covered the fields of Latium with a cloud of edifices, "like the snow of Homer's Olympus," says the rhetorician Aristides, "which veils the summit of the mountains, the wide plains, and the cultivated farms of men."*

On the second question, which regards the number of the population, it is nearly as difficult to form a correct judgement. Estimates have varied from between four and five million to between four and five hundred thousand. The first is a palpable exaggeration, and is to be attributed to the magniloquent statements of professed rhetoricians and rhetorical historians. These have, however, deceived the great mediæval scholar Justus Lipsius, who, in his work upon the subject, adopts the former estimate, and that too even for a later period, when the empire was rapidly declining. His authority was long paramount, but the reaction against it has run into the opposite extreme. Those who have fixed the number of inhabitants between five and six hundred thousand, are in error, for two reasons. In the first place, they take the circuit of the city as drawn out by Marcus Aurelius as a basis for their calculations. This can scarcely have been the time when the population was most dense; but, even if we waive this objection, we must remember that the lines of Marcus Aurelius were constructed for military defence, and as such must almost of necessity have omitted the greater part of the suburbs. Another consideration has escaped them. They forget how closely the ancient populations were packed. A people, one half of whom were slaves, and half of the remainder proletarian paupers, did not require, or did not, at any rate, obtain, very extensive accommodations. An Anglo-Saxon would probably marvel at the

* Aristides, "De Urbe Româ."

ménage of two-thirds of the inhabitants of modern Naples; but ancient Rome, with its vast barracks and subterranean cells for slaves, who also filled the temples and the baths, must have crowded men together far more densely than any modern city; and indeed, the immense height and close propinquity of ordinary dwelling-houses formed the subject, more than once, of legal enactment, as they were perpetually the theme of satirists, writers of epigrams, and historians.*

The negative sort of proof derived from these facts is supported by others of a more positive character. We know, for instance, that Julius Cæsar found the number of needy citizens who received the government largess of corn to be 320,000; and despite all attempts at reduction, it still reached that number in the time of Augustus.† Again, Josephus, Tacitus, and Suetonius, inform us that the corn of Egypt and Africa was reserved for the support of the metropolis.‡ The amount of corn imported was about 60,000,000 modii, or bushels, which would suffice for about one million souls. These statements agree with what we have reason to believe of the relative proportion of proletarians and the remaining denizens of the city, including slaves. If we place the population of the city of Rome at something more than one million, slave and free, we shall probably be near the truth.

Count de Champagny § arrives at nearly the same result by another analysis. After a careful examination of authorities, he divides the Roman population under the Empire into four classes. The first, or financial and judicial aristocracy, comprised four subdivisions, each containing about 1,000 citizens: 1. Senators, and sons of senators; 2. The Equites, or Knights, as they are popularly but improperly called; 3. Tribunes of the Treasury, functionaries nominated by the

* Juvenal; Martial. † Suetonius, J. C. 41; Dion. Hal. lib. 14.
‡ Josephus, Bell. Jud. ii. 16; Tacit. Ann. xi. 43; Suetonius, Claud. 18. § Les Césars.

people; 4. Citizens whose incomes reached the sum of 200,000 sesterces. The second he describes as the tiers-état of Rome, a crowd of inferior functionaries employed about the temples and the courts of law, forming a bureaucracy numerous and important; to whom we must add, merchants, bankers, farmers of the taxes, men of business of various sorts, who all had their "colleges," clubs, or guilds, for purposes of mutual protection and advantage. The third class were the proletarians, or *capite censi*, i. e. rated according to number, not property, who paid no taxes, and lived upon the "frumentations," or public largesses of corn. They amounted, as we have seen, to 320,000. The fourth class comprised the strangers and the slaves. Of the latter, we shall have occasion to speak at length. It is enough to say, that to the immense number of slaves in the hands of private individuals we must add those of the emperor, those belonging to the state, and those of the army. The numbers of the latter class must have been immense, for each pretorian, and most probably each legionary, had his own. As to the strangers, our own experience of London and Paris is enough to show in what multitudes they must have crowded, to a city which was at once the London and Paris of antiquity. Upon the whole, therefore, Count de Champagny concludes, that the free population may be estimated at 500,000, the strangers and slaves at an equal number, and the garrison under Nero, at 16,000,—amounting in all to 1,016,000. This must be considered as the highest point ever reached. The civil wars which followed upon the death of Nero, the tyranny of Domitian and Commodus, the general declension of the Empire, and the unpatriotic, anti-Roman character of the later emperors, diminished materially the numbers of those who dwelt in or resorted to Rome; and we hear that as early as the time of Septimus Severus the daily consumption of corn had fallen to 75,000 bushels.

I have thus endeavoured to give some idea—a very faint and vague one, I am sure—but still, perhaps, some idea of the imperial City and the world she governed with so light a rein. How it was that with so little apparent effort she performed so vast a labour, is an interesting speculation for political philosophers and statesmen. Much, we must repeat, is to be ascribed to the terror of the Roman name, and the almost superstitious awe with which centuries of success had taught men to regard it. Resistance to certain individuals who had assumed a right to wield the terrors of this name was, indeed, occasionally undertaken as a matter of personal rivalry, where each party sheltered themselves beneath the pretence to imperial authority; but resistance to Rome herself, as Rome, was scarcely dreamt of in the West; or, if attempted in the German forests, was perpetually enfeebled and disorganized by sedition. We must also add the fact, that Rome had no rival power in all the world with whom a rebel might find refuge, as the political exile of Paris seeks safety in London or New York. It was in vain for the disaffected eques or senator to attempt flight, when the all-pervading power of the emperor was at hand to seize upon the fugitive, from the Pillars of Hercules to the Caspian Sea, and from the wall of Antonine to the cataracts of the Nile. But granting all this, there was something else to be taken into account, as we have already said, to which attention has not perhaps been sufficiently accorded—the central situation of Rome itself among the vast regions over which her well-organized executive extended. The Mediterranean rolled like a great artery through this compact body of states and countries. The Mediterranean has from immemorial ages formed the highway of the nations as they passed to and fro on the mission of civilization. Its aspect takes hold of the imagination of the philosopher as strongly as that of the poet. More has been said and sung in its praise than has been said or sung of any other portion

of the earth's surface, not excepting Italy itself. "What a noble subject for a poem the Mediterranean would be," said General Paoli; or "for twenty poems," adds Southey. "The grand object of travelling," was Johnson's comment on the remark, "is to see the shores of the Mediterranean. All our religion, almost all our law, almost all our arts, almost all that sets us above savages, has come to us from the shores of the Mediterranean."* Who does not remember the eloquent apostrophe of Byron? But long before Byron, it had been described in glowing terms by one of the great triumvirs of the revival of letters—Justus Lipsius. "It is stretched across the world," he says, "like a baldric across the body of a man; a magnificent girdle, studded with isles as with glittering gems, and uniting, at the moment it distinguishes them, the shores between which it flows."† The cradle of civilization, it is associated in our minds with all the great events of ancient history, and most of the more important revolutions of modern times. Conquest, commerce, civil liberty, and science, all seem to have started into life upon its banks, and pushed their pathway across its waves. All the great cities of the ancient world looked down upon its waters or their tributary seas,—Tyre, Carthage, Athens, Corinth, Alexandria, Rome, Constantinople, Marseilles. The tide of conquest was perpetually rolling toward its shores. Shalmaneser, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, sought, one after another, to win the Syrian seaboard. The great rulers of the Persian dynasty, Cyrus, Xerxes, and Darius, precipitated themselves upon Ionian and European Greece. Beside its waves, in a pass between the sea and the Cilician mountains, Alexander smote down the Persian empire, and returned to found a capital for the world at the spot where it receives the waters of the Nile. Soon Carthage spread her commerce along its southern shore, colonized the

* Boswell's "Johnson," vol. v. p. 145.
† Lipsius de Mag. Rom. i. 3.

coast of Spain, and passed upon her adventurous path beyond the Pillars of Hercules. Carthage, in her turn, surrendered the central sea, the symbol and means of empire to her rival Rome; and Rome embraced it more completely still, with the encircling arms of conquest, from Gades to Byzantium.

But the hold of the Roman empire is at length loosened by a dying grasp, and the empire of the Caliphs and the empire of Charlemagne come down to exchange defiance across its waters, like two paladins of chivalry on the opposite banks of a river which divides their hosts. Meanwhile, the blue-eyed Scandinavian Vikings sweep like sea-eagles from the shores of the Baltic, through the portals of Gibraltar, and teach Sicily and Apulia the terrors of the northern sword. The Crusades come next. The Mediterranean is covered with the fleets of Christendom, the red-cross banner is seen in every port, the glitter of steel is as ubiquitous on her bosom as the waves which glisten in the sun. The Crescent, too, has her turn, and the multitudinous galleys of the East swarm around Rhodes and the rock of Malta, as they follow the flying track of the gallant Brethren of St. John. New quarrels, new enterprises are decided in that watery arena. At last the greatest of modern conquerors is born within its bosom. The Corsican Bonaparte knows full well the traditions of glory and of dominion which cling round his native sea, and would make them his own. It is the dream of French ambition that the Mediterranean shall be a French lake. That dream is dissipated by the thunder of the guns which proclaim the victory of Nelson and the Nile. Our own eyes have seen the gallant armaments which Western Europe sent forth to arrest the onward march of the Muscovite towards these jealously-guarded waves; our own ears have caught the sounds of battle as they rolled downward through the Dardanelles. Who could look without emotion upon a sea which has borne upon its breast the fleets which went forth to Salamis and

Syracuse, to the Ægates Insulæ, Lepanto, Aboukir, Sebastopol? Who can look forward to its future fortunes without the belief that the destinies of nations may yet be decided on its waves? It was, then, this sea which Rome proudly called "*nostrum mare*,"—*our own sea;* and which the Arab boatman, faithful to the traditions of the past, still calls "the Sea of Roum." It was also styled "the Great Sea;" and for the ancient and mediæval world, a mass of water which covered an area of 760,000 square miles, and stretched for 2,000 miles in length, from Phœnicia to the Straits of Gibraltar, may well have deserved the name. It is but four hundred years since the great Genoese has opened out to European knowledge the vast oceanic spaces of the Atlantic and Pacific, which *we* should describe as great seas. But to Rome the midland sea was in every sense great, and to the facilities which it afforded for her government, and to her own position, as what a French poet, in speaking of another city, has called "a predestinated capital," is in no slight measure to be ascribed her prosperity and her power. By the waters of this convenient central basin, and by the rivers and seas with which it was connected, the produce and the news of the world were wafted to her gates, and her legions went forth into the remotest regions of the West, and North, and East. The Euxine and the Tanais connected her with the steppes of Tartary. By the Nile she communicated with the cataracts of Syene and the distant Ethiopians, with the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, and all the commercial districts of India. She could pass by the Ebro through Spain up to the Tagus, and thence to the Lusitanian mountains and the shores of the Atlantic. By the Rhone she penetrated into central Gaul, and opened out communication with the Loire and the Rhine,—rivers which gave her the command, for commercial and military purposes, of the whole of the west of Europe. These natural lines of water-traffic she skilfully connected by canals. The

canal of Drusus united the Rhine to the Yssel; that of Corbulo, the Rhine to the Meuse. Cisalpine Gaul was crowded with similar works of engineering skill. Tacitus records the bold project of cutting through the Isthmus of Corinth; and there were others of a scarce less enterprising character.

We should, however, form to ourselves a very insufficient notion of this immense system of internal communication if we failed to take into account those gigantic works, relics of which still remain, to symbolize the genius of Rome —the Roman roads. Straight as an eagle's flight, these highways, built of the most solidly-compacted materials, passed onward from one limit of the Empire to the other, overleaping valleys and rivers upon viaducts, cleaving their way through rocks, or toiling straight on over the summits of almost inaccessible mountains. The resolute purpose of the people may be discerned in the traces which they have left behind them of their path over the face of the earth,—a path ever undeviatingly directed to their goal, and never turning aside, either from respect for the rights of property or the impediments of nature. From the central terminus at Milan several such lines passed through the gorges of the Alps, and connected Italy with Lyons and Mayence on one side, and with the Tyrol and the Danubian provinces on the other. Augustus united Spain and southern Gaul by a grand route from Cadiz to Narbonne and Arles. Lyons, again, was another common centre from which parted long military ways to Saintes, Marseilles, Boulogne, and Mayence; thus forming a network of communication between the three seas that surround Gaul and the Rhine. In Britain, most of us have had opportunities of tracing the direction of these colossal works. Any good map of the country will give us an opportunity of estimating their character by familiar examples. It would be tedious to pursue the subject further, and it is enough to know that, without quitting these admirably-constructed routes, the Roman legionary

leaving Narbonne, in Southern Gaul, might pass the Rhine at Mayence, traverse the perilous confines of the Hercynian forest, and the hardly less perilous ground included under the provinces of Rhætia, Vindelicia, Pannonia, and Thrace; cross the Greek sea, make his way through Asia Minor, Palestine, and Egypt; and then, with his face once more towards the west, skirt the southern coast of the Mediterranean till he embarked for Cadiz, and thence pursued his path over the Pyrenees to the camp from which he had started at Narbonne.

We have seen the geographical limits and political divisions of the Roman empire—what lay beyond? The Barbarian world. The answer is in the main correct. Still, as I have before said, between the two were to be found a number of petty kingdoms or chieftaincies, enjoying various degrees of independence as "allies and friends of the Roman people." They are described by the Roman historian somewhat singularly, as in a state of "*dubiæ libertatis*," or standing in a scale of nicely-graduated dependence from entire submission to vague acknowledgment of Roman supremacy. The kingdoms of Damascus, Comagene, Pontus, and numberless other similar principalities, paid tribute to the neighbouring proconsul, submitted to the Roman censors, and, in short, stood in a relation to the imperial government very like that which the Spanish or German "marches" bore to the empire of Charlemagne, or the native Rajahs of Hindostan to the government of the East-India Company. Again, the petty princes of the Caucasus, the rulers of Albania and Iberia, the Armenian kingdom, and the little realm of Palmyra, ever hovering in their allegiance between the rival empires of Rome and Parthia, when the influence of the former predominated, rather claimed the protection than acknowledged the authority of the great city of the West.* Still, generally speaking, she gave them kings, re-

* Tacitus, Ann. ii. 56.

gulated the succession, and sometimes exacted subsidies. Indeed, this was the case with the great Eastern antagonist of Rome, the Parthian empire itself. Its kings were often educated on the banks of the Tiber, beneath the shadow of the imperial palace on the Palatine, and owed their throne to the intervention of the patron Cæsar. There was ever a powerful faction at the Parthian court opposed to the ruling despot, which had its own candidate for the purple ready to avail himself of every symptom of revolution and domestic discontent. Rome, true to the Machiavellian policy, "Divide and govern," was always at hand to protect this candidate, and interfere in his favour. How unchangeable is the East! The policy of Hastings and Dupleix in Mysore and Bengal is precisely the policy of Tiberius towards the Parthian rulers; and as we read the account of Roman missions and embassies to the Parthian empire, we seem to be reading the transactions of a governor-general with Rajahs and Indian kings. Upon the whole, Rome preserved the peace tolerably well with her allies and good friends. Their somewhat loose and vague adherence served her turn. But occasionally some ambitious emperor made a raid among them, and the admiring inhabitants of the capital heard of monarchies overthrown and whole countries annexed to their dominion. "Every day," says Gibbon, speaking of Trajan, "the astonished senate received the intelligence of new names and new nations that acknowledged his sway. They were informed that the kings of Bosphorus, Colchos, Iberia, Albania, Osrhoene, and even the Parthian monarch himself, had accepted diadems from the hands of the emperor; that the independent tribes of the Median and Carduchian hills had implored his protection, and that the rich countries of Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria were reduced into the state of provinces."*

Now, when we review this immense variety of "peoples,

* Gibbon, i. ch. 1.

nations, and languages" which Rome had integrated into a coherent whole, we must, I think, be struck with one significant fact,—a fact which Gibbon has noticed, but hardly with that emphasis which it deserves. This complex civilization was composed of two separate elements, which differed greatly in their character, and in their influence upon the destinies of mankind. A line drawn from Dalmatia down the Adriatic, and cutting the African coast near the famous city of Cyrene, will pretty accurately divide these two civilizations, the eastern of which was Greek, and the western Latin in its origin. Sicily, it is true, and Magna Græcia lie westward of this line; but though Greek by colonization and by manners, they had at a very early period become integral parts of Rome, and remained Roman in their laws, institutions, and fortunes. "If,"--I translate from the interesting work of Count Franz de Champagny,—"after crossing the Libyan deserts, which cost Cato thirty days' march and so many hardships, we catch sight of a building as it rises in the distance, it will no longer be the thatched roof of the African, the rude Numidian cottage. No; it has somewhat of the purity and harmony of the Greek temple; 'tis Berenice, 'tis Cyrenaica! Here a new world begins: here, all at once, separated from the other only by that belt of sand,—the Eastern world—the world of Greece—arises before your eyes. Rome reigns not here save by her proconsuls and her lictors; it is Greece that really reigns by language, by religion, by manners. Cyrene, that oasis of civilization cast into the midst of the desert, has bravely defended her Greek nationality against the barbarian. Here we enter upon the second portion of the Roman world, into that Greece which has fallen beneath Roman laws at an era when she had been already civilized by colonization and the conquests of Alexander."*

This language is no less picturesque than true. The

* Les Césars, vol. ii. ch. 1.

Roman world, that is, the world of the Empire and the Cæsars, had received its culture from two sources. Greek civilization propagated itself far and wide at a very early period in many different directions. The coast of Asia Minor was of course entirely Greek; the northern seaboard of the same peninsula was also Greek; Byzantium, "the empire of the world," as Napoleon called it, was of Greek foundation. The shores of the Euxine, and even the Tauric Chersonese, received Greek settlers, and were the scenes of Grecian legend, the homes of Grecian art. We have all heard of, or perhaps have seen, the valuable relics which Russia had accumulated in the museum at Kertch. To the south and west, Cyrene, the rival of Carthage, carried the language and influence of Greece to the very sands of the Libyan desert. Sicily and South Italy were, as has been said, Greek in dialect, institutions, manners, and name. The flourishing colony of Massilia, or Marseilles, was founded by Phocæans, that is, by Asiatic Greeks. Their traders penetrated into the fastnesses of Celtic Gaul, and gave the Greek alphabet to the painted savages who brought them furs, amber, or tin from the unknown realms lying beyond the pale of civilized life.* The same men passed the Pillars of Hercules; well-known traditions attest their presence on the west coast of Africa, and even under the shadow of that great peak whose summit, lost among the lofty clouds, gave rise to the legend of Titanian Atlas, bearing upon his mighty shoulders the superincumbent heaven.

The conquests of Alexander were, however, the most conspicuous means of diffusing Greek civilization. From the ruins of his empire there sprang up Greek monarchies in Macedonia, Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, and Bactriana. Antioch, and above all Alexandria, had the same origin. From the latter emanated the chief intellectual in-

* Cæsar, de Bello Gallico, lib. ii.

fluences which, after the fall of Athens, acted upon the ancient world.

Rome, on the other hand, placed between the Celts of Cisalpine Gaul and the Ionians of Magna Græcia, received from the latter a civilization which she imparted to the first, and afterwards transmitted across the Alps. Her long struggle with Carthage made her mistress of Sicily, Africa, and Spain, and into these countries she introduced her institutions in the track of her victorious arms. Twenty-four years of incessant and bloody warfare brought the tribes of Transalpine Gaul to her feet, and it was in Southern Gaul that she most successfully planted her own image, and saw a new and Romanized world grow up on every side. Her grasp of Britain was less firm, but still the sword and policy of Agricola graved an unmistakable impress of Rome and her civilization upon our barbarous land. What little of civilized life was found on the opposite banks of the Rhine and Danube clung around the camp of the legion, where was displayed to the rude tribes of Germany, a miniature picture of the Roman city, with its artificial habits and social discipline.

It will be seen, then, that Greece and Rome divided between them the civilization of the empire. Speaking in general terms, to the former belonged the eastern, to the latter the western half. The distinction was very positive, and of no little importance. Yet the statesmen of the Empire do not appear to have been fully alive to its force. They scarcely seem to have perceived that though the Greek had accepted the Roman name, he was still an alien in tastes, feelings, habits, and national aspirations; and as an alien would naturally avail himself of the first opportunity to assert independence, if not to aim at superiority. Constantine could hardly have purposed, by his transference of the seat of government to a Greek town, that Greece should acquire an entire and lasting preponderance in the East.

Yet such was undoubtedly the result. When both races were united under one head, and obeyed a vigorous central authority on the banks of the Bosphorus, the difference was perpetually asserting itself in many inconvenient ways. At a later period it caused the partition of the Empire, and later still the great schism of Christendom. The eastern or Greek civilization partook of the national characteristics. Brilliant and intellectual, it was deficient in the more solid worth, which stability of principle and steadfastness of purpose alone confer. The immense mental activity, and the taste for the beautiful, with the power of producing it in concrete shapes, which formed the undoubted birthright of the Greek race, were developed into a love of sensuous enjoyment, which in its exaggeration becomes incompatible with the true dignity of men or nations, and is a significant symptom of their fall. The civilization, therefore, which Greece gave to the world, however showy in itself, however capable of influencing the minds and life of others, could not impart to any people the attributes required for solid and permanent power. Such was precisely the condition of the East, with which Augustus and his successors had to deal. But in the west lay the real strength of the Empire, for the West, in imbibing civilization through the medium of Rome, had also acquired somewhat of her sterner and more resolute spirit, and her aptitude for dominion. The plains of Pharsalia tried the men and decided the destiny of the two civilizations. Cæsar knew to whom and to what he trusted when he played for the great stake of the empire of the world with the veteran legions of Gaul against the tumultuous levies of Greece and Syria. Even then, "the star of Empire glittered in the West." The perspicacious genius of Augustus discerned the fact. He spent the first years of his government in company with his minister, Agrippa, upon a progress through Spain and Gaul, which may be said to have entirely Romanized those provinces, and consolidated

his own power. Henceforth no breath of rivalry or sedition west of the Adriatic and the Alps shook the throne of the Cæsars. These countries, assimilated by the genius of Rome, henceforth shared her honours, her perils, and her fall.

Thus, then, we see that to the Barbarian world Rome presented one front; to the world already civilized by the Greek, another. To the first she condescended; she distrusted the second. To the barbarian, conquered by her sword, she felt that she was all in all; the giver of everything he had,—the arts and appliances of social life, knowledge, law, the first notions of political government: she knew that she could Romanize him—make him hers, and hers alone. The barbarian therefore she welcomed with open arms; she strewed his country with colonies; she gave him her institutions; she educated his children, admitted them to the rights of citizenship, and bestowed upon them the honours of the senatorial order. Some of them even sat upon her throne. But with the Greek, and the men whom the Greek had taught, the case was widely different. They were already inheritors of a civilization superior to anything which Rome could give, and therefore, partly from pride and partly from policy, she kept them at a distance. The Mistress of the world could ill brook superiority of any kind; and completely as she had adopted the Greek language and literature in all things appertaining to her intellectual life, in her official capacity she clung jealously to native customs and forms of speech. Latin was the language of public life: it appears in the senate, in the acts of the legislature, in all imperial documents, at the tribunal of the proconsul, in the courts of law. It was a high offence against the state if her magistrates employed another tongue.* Tiberius noticed with indignation a Greek word which had accidentally crept into a *senatus-consultum*.† Claudius withdrew the right of Roman citizenship from a man who did

* Valerius Maximus, ii. 2, § 2. † Suetonius, Tib. 71.

not understand Latin.* We all remember the angry invectives of Cicero against Verres and Antony for appearing publicly in Greek costume. Yet, at the very same time, and among the same men, Greek was the language of literature and daily life. It was every whit as familiar as their own. "You speak our two languages," said Claudius to a barbarian, who understood Greek and Latin. In Greek they wrote, conversed, scolded their slaves, criticised the last new book, made love—

> "*Quoties intervenit illud,*
> *Ζωὴ καὶ Ψυχή!*"†

Meanwhile the Greek did not return the compliment. He lectured his Roman masters on philosophy or rhetoric, he amused them by his wit and his buffooneries, but it was always in his own tongue. Their barbarian dialect he treated with contempt. Plutarch, who had discharged all sorts of public missions at Rome, only attempted to read Latin late in life; and even then, as he tells us in the Life of Demosthenes, did not trouble himself to do much more than guess at the meaning of the words. The mutual jealousy and antagonism exhibited in the matter of language had other more important results. We never hear of Greek senators, Greek proconsuls, Greek candidates for the imperial throne. In Greece and the countries under Greek influence were comparatively few Roman colonies, and the fact is very significant. There is also another fact of no little significance. Alexandria was the second, in some respects the first, city of the Roman world. Almost a rival, she might possibly become an antagonist of Rome. Alexandria therefore was a special object of Roman jealousy; a jealousy aggravated by the fact that Egypt was the granary of Italy. Singular restrictions were therefore from a very early period imposed upon intercourse with any part of the province,

* Suetonius, Claud. 43. † Juvenal, vi. 194.

and by a special provision it was ordained that no Egyptian might, under any circumstances, become a member of the senate.

I might easily accumulate illustrations, but I have perhaps been tedious already. My excuse is, the necessity of studying carefully the mutual relation of these two civilizations, as some help towards understanding the division of the Empire between Rome and Constantinople, and the long train of consequences which followed upon the dissolution of ancient society into a Greek and Roman world, not the least memorable of which is the schism of Christendom into an Eastern and Western Church.

The consequences of this indestructible opposition were developed in a long train of events, but it is beyond dispute that this train of events was practically inaugurated by Constantine the Great, when, on the 11th of May, 330 A.D., he consecrated upon the Bosphorus a new and rival Rome. This great change in the imperial policy was commenced by his predecessor, Diocletian, and finally carried out by his successors. But it was Constantine himself who first actually broke with the traditions of old Rome, republican as well as imperial, and thereby he has brought upon himself the bitter criticism of all those writers who were attached—many of them naturally enough—to the ancient *régime*, its splendours, its triumphs, and supposed invincibility. Some of these have asserted that Constantine was actuated by merely personal motives in transferring the seat of empire to the East. "He felt that he was unpopular in Rome; his reception there had been but lukewarm, while the opposition of those devoted to the old faith, though smothered for the moment, was implacable and menacing. The terrible tragedy of Faustus and Crispa had cast a gloom over the place of its perpetration: their avenging shadows haunted the presence of their murderer, and drove him from the spot." Probably this is true, if we regard it as a con-

sequence rather than a cause of the imperial policy and dispositions. Inheriting the traditions of Diocletian, and professing the Christian faith, Constantine must have seen that Rome was not the place where he could safely appear either in one character or the other. There is no reason to doubt his sincerity in either capacity. His subsequent conduct proves that he entertained a profound conviction of the wisdom and utility of the new regulations introduced by the Dalmatian peasant for the conservation of the imperial authority; and, waving for a moment the question of motives, his whole life after conversion attests his fixed determination to make Christianity take the place of the ancient cults as the state religion of Rome. And therefore he must have felt that the words of the old Latin Satirist were, in a new sense, appropriate to his situation: *Quid Romæ faciam, mentiri nescio?* With his fixed purpose, and his opinions, had he striven after peace, his life at Rome must have been one long practical lie. Had he cast off the mask, and boldly avowed the revolution which he meditated, his life must have been a bloody and protracted combat—a combat of very doubtful issue, for it would have been fought in the stronghold of the enemy. At that era the Church could not have arisen under the shadow of the Capitol, nor would that Oriental and despotic absolutism, in which Constantine believed as the "salvation of society," have securely taken root within sight of the Senate-house. Debased as was the Rome of Nero and Domitian, some republican memories still lingered within its walls; though Liberty was dead, a sentiment of Equality, as often happens, imperfectly survived. Possibly no more degraded race was to be found on the earth than the Roman patriciate; yet there was that among them which rendered them unfit to fulfil the functions of eastern courtiers in the neighbourhood of the Forum; and even if the influence of place and tradition, and long *prestige* had been powerless, there still remained the more powerful

influence of personal ambition. The imperial purple was a prize which seemed to hover within the grasp of every Roman senator; but this was no longer possible under the rule of a master upon the eastern model, such as Diocletian wished to be, and Constantine was. The experiment essayed by the former at Nicomedia, was by the latter converted at Byzantium into a success.

It would be too tedious to relate the whole process of that experiment here, or to detail with minuteness the means employed to carry it out. Such is the province of the professed historian; and to the regular histories we must refer for a description of the machinery, civil, ecclesiastical, and military, of the new administration. We can merely glance at one or two points which seem to possess special interest or importance.

Diocletian, as we have said, saw that, if the empire was really to be governed as a monarchy, it must cease to be at the disposal of the strongest military force which could be brought to bear upon the Capital. If the throne was ever to have stability or strength, it must, he felt, be rescued from the degrading weakness which had rendered it the prize of successive adventurers. His political measures, however disastrous in many of their results, were steadily directed towards this end. Hence his gradual approximation to the type of an eastern despot; his multiplication of an army of functionaries, the useful ministers and interested adherents of a centralized absolutism; his disposition of the legions on the distant frontier; his transference of the seat of government to Bithynia, or Subalpine Gaul. But he seems to have been staggered by the hopeless antagonism of the East and West, of the Greek and the Latin world, and therefore he attempted a corresponding partition of the empire. Heir to his ideas in other respects, Constantine could never induce himself to consent to this. His aspiring genius clung to the traditions of the Cæsars, and he deter-

mined that the successors of Augustus should still be masters of both worlds. It was impossible, therefore, for him to fix his capital at Nicomedia or Milan. He sought a spot where the two worlds seemed to meet, the two civilizations to mingle, hoping that, from such a vantage-ground, he might be enabled to overlook and sway them both. For a moment he thought he had discovered the object of his search near the site of ancient Troy—a locality hallowed by the immortal legend of Homer, and calculated, it might be presumed, to exercise a powerful influence over both the Asiatic and the European imagination. But all sentimental considerations at once gave way before the marvellous natural advantages of Byzantium, and its singular aptitude for his own special purpose. Probably no man, from the earliest Hellenic mariner to the last tourist of the nineteenth century, upon whom that glorious panorama has burst after emerging from the narrow waters of the Dardanelles, ever failed to recognize the extraordinary character of that unrivalled site, which has made the city of Constantine "a predestinated capital," a meet metropolis for the civilized world. The truth must have flashed upon the perspicacious genius of the emperor, and ten centuries of existence, conferred upon a feeble rule and degenerate people, attest the wisdom of his choice. He lost no time in putting his intentions into effect, nor did he disdain the assistance which the report of miraculous guidance was sure to confer upon the undertaking. An eagle winging his flight across the strait, let fall a stone from his claw upon the site of the future city. A mysterious forerunner, invisible save to himself, preceded his steps, as he traced the area of the new Rome, and suffered him not to pause until he had encircled a space of fifteen stades.

The accounts given of the time occupied in filling up this immense inclosure with edifices are altogether fabulous. Nine months is the period assigned by some writers; and

even if we extend this to two or three years, such an architectural exploit appears incredible. It was the passion of the emperor, so far as possible, to reproduce old Rome upon that distant shore. Seven irregular elevations still justified the epithet of the "Seven-hilled City." Many public buildings were constructed upon the exact model of those beside the Tiber; nay, the emperor is said to have erected private dwellings for his friends, where every stone, every piece of furniture, was copied from their former mansions within the walls of Rome. It was necessary to provide a population for the newly-erected Capital. Nor was Constantine scrupulous as to the means. Personal and courteous invitations brought many rich proprietors from Italy or the provinces: where invitation failed, more rigorous measures were tried. Among other arbitrary ordinances, we hear of one which forbade the owners of property in Asia to dispose of it by Will, unless they had previously built a house in Constantinople. Large masses of the lower orders were easily collected by the old expedients, pomps and shows, the games and races of the Circus, free distributions of corn, and even the pomp of religious processions,—for his enemies do not fail to reproach the emperor with this inconsistency. Among this strangely accumulated society, Constantine erected his throne, and surrounded it with a whole legion of functionaries, who ramified to the remotest parts of the Empire, and pushed from their stools the ancient aristocracy. Still further to secure the latter object, Constantine created a new nobility. Men entirely disconnected with all the associations of old Rome formed the fittest support for a dynasty which was determined to work itself clear from all the old sources of rivalry and weakness. Availing himself of the existing official names as most calculated to conciliate respect, he attached to them privileges and prerogatives, and gradations of rank, which, perhaps for the first time in Europe, gave an example of the

etiquette of a monarchical court. Undoubtedly the experiment was tried by Diocletian; but now the experiment had become an institution. The numerous and carefully-distinguished titles of this new Patriciate, their various functions and duties, with the graduated scale of their dignities, have been given by Gibbon, and other historians of the epoch. It is unnecessary to repeat them at present; only let us remember that the result was the creation of a class of persons widely differing from those who had previously stood in a similar proximity to the imperial throne. It was a great epoch in the history of the Empire, a crisis in its social condition, and therefore we dwell upon it here. In many respects this newly-created aristocracy resembled more closely that which surrounded the throne of modern European monarchs, than the proud patriciate which did not altogether fall with the fall of the Roman republic, but lived on, though transfigured and debased, into the imperial *régime*. To them, indeed, may be ascribed the origin of many official usages still existing; much of the overstrained and servile phraseology which has survived even the era of Puritan ascendancy, and the Reign of Terror; and, as it has been thought, the outward trappings and insignia of modern nobility, the crest, if not the coat of arms. In all this the policy of Constantine is patent, though it has been grossly misrepresented and misconceived. To convert a despotism disguised under the forms of a republic into an actual monarchy; to separate himself from the traditions of the past; to break up the influences which had been fatal to the stability of the throne; to obviate the internal rather than the external perils which threatened society, and to establish order and unity of action throughout his wide-spread dominions,—these were his objects; and in comprehending them, we possess the key to the somewhat involved enigma of his policy and his life. To the Christian Church, as the theoretical embodiment of Order and Unity, he looked for

aid in this great labour, and did not altogether look in vain, though he lived to experience bitter disappointment from her disunion. How far this may have been the secret of his attachment to the Christian faith, it is not for his fellow-men judicially to declare. But that he looked more to the outward action of the Church than to her internal spirit,—that he regarded her as the great organizer of society rather than as the great teacher and guardian of the souls of men,—is, I think, proved by the singular inconsistencies of his own private practice, by his vacillation in the treatment of Arius and Arian doctrine, by his evident determination at the close of his life to secure external uniformity among professing Christians at any cost.

Of all the means, however, employed by Constantine to carry out the policy which has been described, his treatment of the army was the most remarkable and the most efficacious. With a few remarks upon this and another matter, which has not been altogether regarded by historians as it deserves, the present lecture must conclude.

It seems a mere platitude to say that to her army Rome owed her greatness and her power. In fact, during the early days of the Republic, the army *was* Rome. The constitution of Servius Tullius identified the two, and it was long ere they were disunited. When the legion went forth to battle, with its heavy-armed citizens in the centre, its mounted nobles upon both wings, its scantily-furnished proletarians in the rear, it was in reality a mimic Rome, which, girt in iron and bristling with steel, opposed itself to the enemy. Hence it was felt in the early days of national growth "*ubi castra, ibi Respublica;*" the household Gods accompanied the eagles, and wherever her legions halted, in the Syrian sands or the morasses of the lower Rhine, there Rome planted a miniature image of herself, and established a worthy representative of her awful name. Hence in a great measure arose her military prestige; her unexampled

strength in colonization and conquest. In process of time, the legion changed its character. In the days of Marius, its old aristocratical distinctions were abandoned in the ranks, and the proletariat admitted upon terms of equality. As Rome expanded and assimilated to herself the world, the constitution of the legion became more expansive also, until under Caracalla, the barbarians, sometimes the friends and sometimes the foemen of the Empire, were crowded beneath the imperial eagles. Long before this, indeed, Rome had ceased to depend for defence upon her own sons. "Italy is resourceless," it was said, "the urban population unwarlike; there is nothing strong in the legions except what comes from abroad."* In the mean time, amid the universal corruption of the equestrian order, the cavalry contingent had disappeared, and this arm of the service was entirely furnished by the allied states. The legion was no longer the city in arms, the legionaries no longer citizens summoned to combat in the cause of their fatherland; they became mere mercenaries, presenting all the features which distinguish such a species of force, and originating all those evils which so long rendered standing armies objects of suspicion and dislike. But with the actual physical force at their command, they inherited much of the prestige which had descended from the days when the army was the representative of the state; and to this they added an arrogance all their own, derived from the shameless facility with which the Roman people had accepted emperor after emperor at their hands. The legion felt itself to be the king-maker wherever stationed, or however employed; but when one king-maker was found in Syria, another in Britain, and a third in the Dalmatian provinces or Upper Germany, each eager to imitate the successful dictation of the other,—the result was utter anarchy, with unceasing alternations of treason, bloodshed, and misery. This was the giant evil which stared Constantine in the face,

* Tacitus, Ann. iii. 40.

and banished, if not entirely from his mind, at any rate from his more immediate anxieties, what to his critics has appeared the greater peril of barbarian invasion. But this, like all *ex post facto* judgments, is an unfair one. Constantine, so often victorious on the banks of the Danube and the Rhine, could not, by any exercise of human prescience, discover the terrible vengeance which destiny had reserved for Rome in the depth of the Sarmatian deserts; whereas, a brief and easy retrospect would recall to his memory the fate of his predecessors, the struggles of his own early life, and the sanguinary contest for empire with a rival commander at the Milvian bridge. Constantine therefore determined to put down the dictation of the army. He determined that it should no longer play the violent and irresponsible part which it had so long played in the drama of domestic politics, and that for the future its function should be to defend, and not to confer the crown. This object he mainly effected by breaking up the old constitution of the legion, by multiplying the divisions of the service and the number of officers in high command, and by entirely isolating the army from the duties of civil life. The policy of the government had long resembled the astute arrangements of Austria, who garrisons Venice with her Croats, and dispatches her Italian grenadiers to Pesth or the banks of the Moldau, and her Bohemians to Mayence. The legionaries levied in Britain were sent to serve in Syria, while Britain was guarded by the tribes of Southern Germany, and the line of the Danube protected by Asiatics or Africans. But the most fatal blow to the old military organization was, without doubt, inflicted by Constantine, in what he called the multiplication of the legions. This was effected by diminishing the number of each to fifteen hundred men, and thus also diminishing the importance, the power, and the *esprit de corps* of each separate body. It was little probable that a small band of professional

soldiers, not much exceeding in number an English regiment, and stationed apart from their fellows, would trouble themselves with questions of imperial policy, or deem themselves capable of determining the succession to the imperial throne.

Another measure of military innovation or reform, which has been severely criticised by his enemies, was the institution of three or four entirely distinct classes of military service. The Palatini formed the garrison of the numerous imperial residences; the Comitatenses, or soldiers of the imperial suite, accompanied their master in his progresses or expeditions; the Castriani, or Riparienses, garrisoned the river fortresses and frontiers of the Empire. The latter class, to whom the most important duties were intrusted, had neither the same pay nor the same privileges as their more fortunate brethren, and were subjected to the command of officers entitled counts and dukes of the frontier. The same policy of "Divide et impera" is evident here. An army thus split up into different and unequally-favoured classes, no longer possessed that unity of interest and action which rendered them terrible to the crown.

One consequence of these measures has called forth the severest criticism, and it certainly was a grave one. By grouping his troops not according to their nationalities, but solely in reference to the nature of their service, Constantine admitted the barbarians into the very heart of his military system, and placed them in positions of authority and emolument such as they had never hitherto acquired. We are told that a barbarian officer of the Palatini, or Comitatenses, was pampered with luxury and inflated by pride in the great cities of the Empire; while the Riparian of Roman birth wasted his life amid irksome and ill-paid duties in some distant garrison. Naturally, the best-paid troops were also the best in quality; and as these were gradually concentrated in central positions, the outer circle of defences became more

carelessly guarded. It cannot be denied that these results followed the policy of Constantine, and I think we must assume that they were intentional. They are to be explained, as I have said, by the fact that the emperor's thoughts were more bent upon sedition than upon war, his precautions directed more against the domestic traitor than the foreign foe. From the same cause he was drawn into more intimate relations with the men of the new blood. He greatly increased the numbers of those whom his predecessors had incorporated into the legions; he kept some of their most distinguished leaders about his person, loaded them with honours, and enriched them by large grants of land. This was doubtless an offence to his contemporaries, and has been made the matter of grievous reproach by the assailants of his policy. From a Roman and a Pagan point of view, they were in the right; but should we, the children of the revolution this policy helped to bring to the birth, indorse their malignant censures and unavailing regrets?

As early as the age of Augustus, that which in the eyes of such censors is the crowning sin of Constantine—the transference of the seat of empire to the East,—had presented itself to the thoughts of Roman statesmen and the suspicions of the Roman public. There can be no doubt but that Horace alludes to it in terms of anxious deprecation more than once. "The whole of the Æneid," Mr. Merivale thinks, "may be read as a continued protest against this crime." But, if a crime in the earlier days of the great imperial experiment, it was a necessity when the experiment had been tried and found so grievously wanting. The struggle between Otho, Galba, Vitellius, and Vespasian utterly negatived all hopes of future success, broke up the foundations of society, and rendered government upon the old principles an impossibility. The eight years of anarchy which almost immediately preceded the advent of the family of Constantine to power, harassed by the rival ambitions of

leaders, cruel and selfish beyond example, deservedly revived the hated title of the reign of Thirty Tyrants, and exhibited so dark a picture of suffering, insecurity, and crime, that they justified—we may say necessitated—the only policy which could bring them to a close.

A distinguished French writer has so admirably expressed the ideas which in a very imperfect form I have long entertained upon this great but scarcely appreciated crisis in the political disease of which the Empire died, that I must ask permission to conclude in his words. "That the heathen writers, that Julian or Zosimus, should have seen in these pacific sentiments" [he is speaking of Constantine's desire, during the later half of his reign, to avoid all collision with external enemies] "the indication of failing courage, resulting from long prosperity; that, forgetting how they admired in Augustus the moderation of satiated ambition, they should represent Constantine in the eyes of posterity as a sovereign rendered effeminate by the luxurious indulgences of absolute power, exhibits nothing more than their ordinary malevolence. Hate and scorn of the stranger had always been the habitual sentiment of every Roman, and now they were specially affected by such as professed a particular attachment to the old customs and the old faith. But that modern and Christian writers, the civilized sons of those very barbarians whom Constantine received at his court, and themselves brought up among the complex relations produced by the equilibrium of European states, should have repeated to us, with a somewhat servile fidelity, the same accusations, is what must give us more reason for astonishment. The reproaches which they cast upon Constantine were made by the men of the fourth century against all Christians in common. They could find no animosity sufficiently disdainful and patriotic for everything outside the circle of Roman citizenship. And, in effect, Christianity, with an unseen action, was gradually sapping and bringing to the ground

the barriers which separated the Roman world from the rest of humanity. When men had treated and loved the Goth or Persian as a Christian brother, they could no longer detest and despise him as an alien. Ever since the time when Christianity had spread beyond the borders of the Empire, relations of a gentler character had established themselves between the Romans and their neighbours. More than once the persecuted Christians had found, on what was called the barbarian border, an asylum against the refinements of cruelty practised by a civilized master. Constantine, whether he knew it or not, did not altogether escape the influence of these new sentiments; not only had he enrolled barbarians among his body-guard, but he had placed upon the benches of the council of Nice, bishops who, beneath their sacerdotal vestments, still wore the Germanic 'sagum' or the Persian robe. They were styled 'fathers,' as the others were; and their suffrages, though expressed in barbaric tongues, had concurred with equal authority to define those Christian doctrines to which Constantine was devoted. From these relations were developed new points of view, which entirely changed the aspects of general policy. A sentiment more liberal and more humane replaced in the breast of the sovereign himself the jealous patriotism of antiquity. Henceforth men were united one with the other by bonds not identical with those of a political constitution. A Christian was naturally disposed to raise that state of siege in which, from prudential motives, ancient civilization had inclosed itself."*

There remains one other matter in the external organization of the Empire which cannot indeed be described as a special cause of its decline, but was rather one of those necessary predispositions which, upon a retrospect of its nature, seem to have indicated the inevitable occurrence of

* L'Eglise et l'Empire Romain, vol. ii. p. 225.

such a result. When Caracalla conferred the right of Roman citizenship upon the civilized world, he was only carrying out a policy inaugurated in the infancy of the Empire; but he was no less manifestly bringing to a close the great work which the Empire, which Rome herself, had been created to do. The day when this famous edict was proclaimed, has been called a solemn day in the history of the human race. Nor is the expression unreasonable or extravagant; for then, at last, was the mission of the imperial nation fulfilled, her task accomplished, her part in the great World-drama played out. Ever since the first access of the Julian party to supreme power, it had been a fixed maxim of their policy to play off the interests of the Provinces against the traditions of the Republic. Beneath the shadow of the Tarpeian, in the very spot overlooked by the temple of Capitolian Jupiter and hallowed by legends of the triumphs, the virtues, and heroic deeds of the Republic, the old spirit might peradventure have been strong enough to reassert its empire even over the debased and impoverished multitude which bore the Roman name. It was, therefore, necessary to introduce into the constitution of the state, and into the very bosom of the capital itself, a new element, which might counteract these undoubtedly dangerous recollections. This new element was found in the now Romanized provinces, more especially that of Gaul, whose distinguished men might not unreasonably claim a share in that country with which they had so heartily identified themselves, and whose material prosperity they were so largely contributing to advance. Hence the admission upon equal terms of Gaulish senators into that august body, whose ancestors had awed the barbarian warriors of Brennus as beings of a superior race. The august body were infinitely mortified and somewhat refractory, but they dared not resist. Like other aristocracies in similar circumstances, they revenged themselves by "bon-mots" upon the awkwardness and unfashionable costume of

the provincials.* But "bon-mots" are feeble weapons against the will of Cæsar and the course of fate. Augustus entered heartily into the same views, by the advice, as we are told, of his able minister Mæcenas. At any rate, the policy upon which the emperor acted is clearly set forth in the language which Dio Cassius† places in that statesman's mouth: "Purify the Senate by the exclusion of unworthy members, and replace those whom you have been compelled to expel, by the most considerable and most wealthy nobles, not of Italy alone, but of the provinces and confederate countries." The advent, therefore, of Augustus to supreme power was warmly welcomed by the provinces, who began to understand how deeply their interests were involved in the transference of authority from a venal senate and factious aristocracy, to an irresponsible absolutism, weighing equally upon all. Tiberius, Claudius, Hadrian, all actively carried out the same principles. The cosmopolitan spirit of Marcus Aurelius breaks out in his aspiration for the empire of free speech, equal laws, and common institutions;‡ and the great Roman jurists of the same era, Salvius, Papinian, and Ulpian, themselves not men of Roman birth, are perhaps the first persons who ever gave a formal and technical expression to the equality of all men in the eyes of the law. "By the law of nature," says one, "all were born free: subsequently, by the law of nations, the practice of slavery was established."§ The dignity of the conception formed of man as a social being gained immensely by the doctrine, but the exclusive dignity attaching to Roman citizenship received a shock from which it never recovered. Other causes also had been long at work tending to bring about the same result. The old practice in relation to citizenship was far too narrow in its character for a state, the law of whose existence was unlimited expansion. Its restric-

* Suetonius, Vita Julii, c. 80. † lii. 19.

‡ Εἰς ἑαυτόν, i. 1. § Ulpian, Lec. 4ta, De Justitiâ et Jure.

tions operated as a check upon commerce and the energies of growing civilization. The luxury of Roman society had immensely increased its connection with all countries of the known world. The rude city of Romulus could now with justice appropriate the somewhat hyperbolical praise bestowed by the patriotism of Pericles upon his native Athens. Each day the winds of heaven wafted all the productions of all lands into her arms. At one and the same time, her tastes were gratified and her wants supplied by metals from the coast of Cornwall and the Scilly isles,—by furs from the wild regions beyond the Vistula,—by the jewels and silks of India,—by the ferocious denizens of African forests,—by perfume from Arabia, and spice from Malabar. The artificial requirements and the widely-extended traffic which these things imply, demanded a very different social and commercial system from the laws which sufficed the Latin shepherds and the Sabine farmers, for whom was framed the first legislation of the Republic. So it came to pass that the old formulas of Roman right gave way by degrees before the new principles necessitated by the new state of things. Laws were modified or evaded, to suit the change of circumstances and the demands of new interests and desires. The prætor's edict excepted and excused violations of the letter of the old law; and at last, when the emperor became sole and irresponsible prætor, the cosmopolitan spirit of which we have already spoken, practically repealed all the restrictions of the ancient code. The logical consequence of all this expressed itself in the edict of Caracalla, when it conferred the right of Roman citizenship upon every community in the Empire.* And although the character of its author, and the purely fiscal and interested object of its apparent liberality, detract from the moral dignity of the edict itself, it

* The full result, however, was not accomplished until the edict was supplemented by the legislation of Justinian, under which the only distinction made was between subjects of the Cæsar and slaves.

has no less an historical grandeur of its own, proving as it does that the work of assimilation and conquest was at an end, and that the little settlement of hunted brigands upon the hills which overlook the Tiber, had at last accomplished its destined function of absorbing the ancient world. Yet the fact that the world had become Roman was scarcely a source of strength to the Empire. It was well for the world, but it was fatal to Rome herself. It unveiled the mysterious Divinity which had sat so long in awful and solitary grandeur upon the central throne of those seven Italian hills: it familiarized to the common mind the shadowy terrors of the great Name, and removed a moral bandage from the eyes of men. The Goddess had, as it were, become a human being, no longer gifted with supernatural attributes, and therefore no longer regarded in a supernatural light, or adorned with the reverent honours of divinity. The multitude no longer worshiped a power in which they had themselves been allowed to participate. The right of Roman citizenship, which had long been a rallying-cry for the natural and adopted sons of Rome in every region throughout the known world—had united them by a fraternal bond—had raised them above their fellows by the consciousness of superior privilege—and animated their minds by a common spirit of loyalty to the central authority from which these honours flowed; this right was no longer a distinction,—no longer a source of either dignity or emolument. Every man was a Roman without effort, and without merit of his own; and as all shared the advantages, social, legal, and commercial, which attached to the fact of citizenship, the right conferred no special privilege, and inspired none of that special pride which the poverty of our language compels us to describe as *esprit de corps*. But when, among the outlying populations of the empire, the attraction towards Rome was withdrawn, the attraction to home and native fatherland began to acquire force. Patriotism became a possibility, and before long

became a fact. Instead of one great local centre of attraction and interest, there were many local centres. Above all, the innate and indestructible discord of East and West,—of Greek and Roman civilization, long smothered by the overpowering predominance of the Latin element,—broke fiercely forth, and has never since been extinguished. Propositions for a division of the Empire had frequently been made, and indeed partially carried into effect long before the dismembering deed of Constantine, or the open partition between the sons of Theodosius. They resulted, of necessity, from the condition of the Empire itself, not from the folly or unpatriotic caprice of individual rulers. It has been usual to ascribe to the sunderance of the imperial body politic under Honorius and Arcadius the evils which produced its dissolution. And it is true that the division of the world into an Eastern and Western Rome was, on the part of Rome, an abdication of her function, and an acknowledgment that the work of a thousand years had at last been brought to a close. Henceforward the outward and artificial unity of the empire of the Cæsars was a thing of the past: for the future was reserved the inner living unity of the kingdom of God. Yet the revolution is not to be regarded as an isolated and startling phenomenon; still less as the consequence of a sudden and irrational impulse in a ruler who had been previously remarkable for his wisdom. The germ of this wondrous future lay hidden in the edict of Caracalla, and the social necessities which it shadowed forth. "The change," writes an able living historian, "was doubtless fortunate for the future of the world,—we may doubt whether it was equally fortunate for the political grandeur of Rome. Be it what it may have been, this profound revolution was recognized rather than wrought out by the edict of Caracalla. Accordingly, as everything was ready for equality, men had not long to wait for the results. A few years after the imperial edict, we behold the purple won without difficulty, and worn without embarrass-

ment, not only by provincials, fashioned, so to speak, into Roman habits, like the Spaniard Trajan, or the African Septimius Severus, but by real aliens, deeply imbued with Oriental or barbarian manners, and with the intention to impose themselves, simply as what they were, upon the capital of the world." *

But we are trespassing upon the subject of another lecture. It is time to consider the moral causes whose secret operation sapped ancient civilization to its base, and evoked from the ruins a new order of things.

* L'Eglise et l'Empire Romain, par M. A. de Broglie, vol. i. p. 31.

LECTURE II.

THE FALL OF ROME.

"Antiquam exquirite matrem."—VIRGIL, *Æn.* ii. 96.

SYNOPSIS.—Policy by which the Roman Power was created and maintained.—Differed from modern Absolutism.—Inaugurated by the Republic.—Broken up by the Civil Wars.—Attempted revival by Augustus.—Modified success.—Strange effect of this upon modern opinion.—Ultimate failure, arising from the Corruption of Domestic Life, and neglect of the only influence capable of regenerating it.—Results seen in the practical Atheism of the age; in its Superstition; in its social demoralization.—Produced by poisoning in the family the fountains of national life.—Effect upon some important social questions; *e. g.* Education; Divorce.—Strange Characters engendered by the Era:—the Emperor; the Senator; the Informer; the Poisoner; the Pantomimist; the Client; the Fortune-hunter; the Parasite.—Two of more importance to the destinies of the Empire: the Gladiator and the Shows.—The Slave and Slavery.—Its dangerous character.—Demoralizes the population of the Capital, and depopulates Italy.—These things, with secondary causes, really destroyed the Empire.

WE cannot better recapitulate what has been said respecting the external aspects of Roman policy and dominion, than in the words of our own great poet, forming, as they do, one of those vivid pictures which are only possible to the combination of true genius with large intellectual culture and accurate learning.

> "The city which thou seest, no other deem
> Than great and glorious Rome, Queen of the earth,
> So far renowned, and with the spoils enriched
> Of nations: there the Capitol thou seest
> Above the rest, lifting his stately head
> On the Tarpeian rock—her citadel
> Impregnable; and there Mount Palatine,
> The imperial palace, compass huge and high;
> The structure, skill of noblest architects,
> With gilded battlements, conspicuous far;
> Turrets, and terraces, and glittering spires.

Many a fair edifice besides, more like
Houses of gods (so well I have disposed
My airy microscope); thou mayst behold,
Outside and inside both, pillars and roofs,
Carved work, the hand of famed artificers,
In cedar, marble, ivory, or gold.
Thence to the gates cast round thine eyes, and see
What conflux issuing forth, or entering in;
Prætors, proconsuls, to their provinces
Hasting, or on return, in robes of state;
Lictors and rods, the ensigns of their power;
Legions and cohorts, turms of horse and wings;
Or embassies from regions far remote,
In various habits, on the Appian road,
Or on the Emilian; some from the farther south,
Syene, and, where the shadow both way falls,
Meroe, Nilotic isle; and, more to west,
The realm of Bocchus to the Black-moor sea;
From the Asian kings, and Parthian among these;
From India and the golden Chersonese,
And utmost Indian isle Taprobane,
Dusk faces with white silken turbans wreathed;—
From Gallia, Gades, and the British west,—
Germans and Scythians, and Sarmatians north,
Beyond Danubius to the Tauric pool,—
All nations now to Rome obedience pay."

Rome had built up and maintained this mighty fabric of dominion by a policy and by institutions which it is impossible to describe at large; but the student would be seriously misled if he were induced to suppose that it was by the favourite arts of modern statecraft that this result was produced. The government of Rome was eminently a centralized government; but the ubiquitous and restless action which characterizes such administration in our own days, to her was utterly unknown. The Roman proconsul or proprætor did indeed periodically traverse the provinces, for the purpose of taking the census, collecting the prescribed revenue, conducting his military levies, and superintending the progress of public works; but with its strictly private or municipal affairs he very rarely interfered. The Syrian or the Gaul might regulate these as he pleased, attend to religion, commerce, or agriculture, and construct temples, theatres, and ports; no imperial official would ask his pur-

pose, or stay his hand. That great engine of modern despotisms, a paid police, was unknown. The "Cause of Order," or the "Pax Romana," as they would have called it, did not require for its preservation any elaborate machinery of espionage, passports, deportations, or other ingenious expedients, known to the absolutism of the nineteenth century. Rome, in fact, stood so utterly above the puny efforts of ordinary provincial revolt,—such a terror waited upon the traditions of her name, that she needed no other expedient than her own strong right arm to crush out, at once and for ever, all attempts at conspiracy and insurrection. The very notion of her fall would have paralyzed her subject populations, and seemed equivalent to the social collapse of the world. As a general rule, therefore, the provincial suffered and appealed, and suffered again, but did not dream of systematic resistance. Rome either amalgamated him with herself, or finally and effectually convinced him of the irresistibility of her power.

Nor, again, was this effected by the ever-impending menace of a gigantic standing army. A centurion and a few soldiers were sufficient to insure the tranquillity of a province. Italy, Spain, Asia Minor, and great part of Gaul, were for a long time positively denuded of a military force. The distribution of the legions I have already described. From this it will be seen that about 150,000 men were sufficient to maintain the authority of Rome, at the apogée of her empire, throughout the Roman world. More than double the number does not satisfy the exigence of states which now include about one-fifth of her dominion. And, indeed, the troops permanently under arms were meant to combat, not so much internal treason, as assaults from without. "The power of Rome," admirably remarks Count Champagny, "was not, as is the case with governments of our own time, a spring invisibly moving a vast machine, which, when its action is arrested, becomes nothing better than a fragile and con-

temptible toy; it was rather the mighty sword of our sires, which, though flung into a corner of the armoury, still inspires respect, and which, sure of its strength, may long linger in the sheath without being forgotten. The force of Rome was entirely a moral force. Modern governments must have their means of government visible, present, active, determined by a mathematical logic, for the purpose of bringing the world into some systematic mathematical order of their own conception. Mathematics have nothing to do with sentimental traditions. Rome, on the contrary, was anything but a mathematician. As she did not trouble herself to discover a law of government in strict accordance with logic, she was content to accept, as maintainers of her power, influences of a less logical—I do not say less reasonable—kind; all those influences, in short, which are found in human life—its memories, sentiments, and hopes. Rome built her power upon the past. To understand her power, therefore, we must go back to the past, make ourselves acquainted with the character of her conquest, take account of the force of her republican institutions, and the influence they exercised upon her policy for 600 years."*

We shall not, as you may well imagine, at present make any such attempt; but the main features of that republican policy which consolidated a universal empire are intelligible enough, and widely known. A public morality based upon the family life and discipline; an iron perseverance in the onward path of conquest, supported by a marvellously-trained soldiery, and tempered by a spirit of wise moderation, which enlisted the sympathies rather than aroused the animosity of the vanquished nationalities; a military system which made the civil society an army almost ready for the field, and the army a civil society in the midst of its battles and campaigns; a recognition at home of public right and public interest dominant over all personal objects, affections,

* Les Césars, vol. ii. p. 69.

and ambitions; an admirable system of colonization, which planted an armed sentinel of civilization, a counterpart of Rome, where nothing but forests, morasses, and barbarian huts had been found before; a conciliatory demeanour, which, by spreading far and wide among savage tribes the amenities and benefits of refined life, in a shape indissolubly associated with Rome, gradually modified the character of her barbarian enemy, and, as in the conspicuous example of the Gauls, eventually identified him, in feeling as in fact, with the great people by whose spirit, rather than by whose sword, he had been subdued; and, finally, to maintain these results, an administrative system organized with wonderful sagacity, avoiding the errors which cling to the modern conception of a centralized government, but not the less referring all things and subjecting all things to the central power, and turning all eyes to the City which sat upon the Seven Hills, as the goal of all ambitions, the arbitress of all destinies, the sole dispenser of honours, emoluments, and pains—these were the Roman arts of which the Roman poet boasted; and he had a right to boast, for they established for a season the most complete dominion which has ever swayed the minds of men.

This policy was in a great measure broken up by the civil wars; for the civil wars broke up old Roman society. They were themselves the miserable, but most natural result of the decay of the Roman spirit, the corruption of the national manners by the inroads of Oriental luxury, the abandonment of the ancient traditionary reverence for authority, and the consequent neglect of that moral and military discipline which had subdued the world. The evil developed itself in many ways; most remarkably, perhaps, in the maladministration of the provinces. "The despotism of the Empire was almost justified," as Professor G. Smith declares, "by the misgovernment of the provinces during the senatorial régime, and the difficulty, almost amounting to an impossibility, of

any effectual reform."* The famous Verrine orations of Cicero amply corroborate this statement. To the scholar it needs no corroboration; for the case of Verres, though a signal, was by no means a singular instance of the mischief inflicted by a bad man, and the misery endured by an oppressed nationality. The evil was aggravated by a circumstance upon which I think historians have not sufficiently insisted. However much we may admire the Roman law as an elaborate and nicely-adjusted system of jurisprudence, it exhibited one error of the gravest character: it was never independent of the existing political power of the state. If the people at large discharged the duties of our modern juries, the state officers were the judges. This, it may be easily seen, opened the door for pecuniary corruption and illegitimate influences of all sorts. Indeed, the entire separation of the judicial and administrative functions seems to be a modern conception, and one of the most valuable additions which has ever been made either to policy or law.† At Rome, their confusion placed the sacred interests of justice at the mercy of electioneering agents, class feeling, and prejudice of all kinds. It was in vain that the constitution of the great judicial tribunal was transferred from the senators to the knights, back again to the senators, or to both in combination. Corruption had free scope, and verdicts were bought and sold, which involved the fortunes of the fairest and most important portions of the Roman empire. From this tainted source, and from others also, the moral contamination spread. During the dreadful days which preceded the advent of the Cæsarean family to power, the fountains of the great deep of human society were broken up, and a deluge of blood

* Oxford Essays, 1856.

† Or perhaps we should say mediæval; for, may it not have arisen from that singular institution, the office of Podesta, instituted by the Italian republics in the 12th century?

and crime swept over the state. The genius of the aspiring Dictator for a moment stayed the storm. I can scarce venture to ascribe to him those far-seeing and disinterested views for which his modern admirers—and they are neither few nor insignificant—are determined to give him credit; yet, with mixed motives, and gradually-developed aims, like those of our own Cromwell, and perhaps those of all men in analogous situations, whether from personal ambition or public spirit, or from both combined, he laboured energetically for the regeneration of Roman society; and, beyond all dispute, it was a great work, which was cut short by the dagger of Brutus on the Capitol.

Octavius succeded to his position, and in many respects to his policy; but he brought more suitable, or at any rate more successful, attributes to the task. The Ulysses of ancient statecraft accomplished more than the monarch of our own time, who has sometimes been so called. He, unlike his modern counterpart, mastered a great nation and impressed his policy in a permanent form upon her institutions. And as it was this policy which imparted to the Roman empire whatever strength and solidity it for some centuries possessed; as it was a departure from this policy, or an incapacity to maintain it, which was the greatest external cause of its decline, it will be worth while in a few words to lay before you its more prominent characteristics. In one word, as Professor Smith has said, "the policy of Augustus was to restore old Rome." But to re-inspire an effete body with the vitality of youth is no easy task for the most skilful leech, and great as Augustus may have been as a state physician, he was unable to accomplish such a resuscitation. He, however, patched up the patient with no little art, and enabled him by artificial expedients and external supports, to assume a temporary appearance of juvenile vigour. He checked public immorality so far as it could be checked by legal enactments; he sought to revive the old

type of domestic life, by discountenancing celibacy, and bestowing special privileges upon the family; he attempted to purify the Senate by the expulsion of unworthy members, and by affording pecuniary assistance to the deserving; he recalled some of the imprudent concessions which his predecessors in authority for the time being had made, and granted others, such as the right of Roman franchise, and the Jus Latinum, with the most politic consideration of the specialities of every case; he made kings and unmade them, treating them like the great feudatory vassals of after-times; he promised thrones and cared for the education of semi-barbarian heirs-apparent in his own palace, always with the most steady and perspicacious regard for imperial interests. At the same time he earnestly endeavoured to raise the character of the Roman citizen, by raising in the first instance the character of Roman citizenship. This he ceased to lavish upon whole provinces at a time, and where he did bestow it, he took care that it should be valued by the recipient, and convey reciprocal strength, by bringing with it the adhesion of powerful cities, or influential men. No prince has, in all probability, ever bestowed more labour upon the external organization of his empire, or taken greater pains to ascertain its resources and condition. At his death, he left behind an autograph note containing an accurate list of the provinces, their cities, their population, resources, and imports; the subject and allied monarchs connected with the imperial régime; its fleets, armies, and auxiliaries; in short, all particulars with which it was desirable for his successor to be acquainted. During his life, he had accumulated this information by careful surveys and registrations, one of which recorded the greatest Name known among men. Nor had he confined his exertions to inquiries alone; he was a real practical redresser of grievances. The provincials were indebted to him for the alleviation of many wrongs under the more responsible system which

divided their superintendence between the Senate and himself. They obtained a recognition of their public right such as they had never heretofore enjoyed, and their affairs were administered with a unity of purpose and a moderation in practice, very different from the capricious oppression of the senatorial governors. "Rome and her provinces," says the historian of the Cæsars, "lived for three centuries beneath the laws and traditions of Augustus. It was at a later period that, decrepit and struggling for existence, it accepted, as the veteran's crutch, the puerile and oriental system of administration which it received from Diocletian." But perhaps Augustus left behind him no more valuable heir-loom than a well-considered admonition,—an order Tiberius calls it,—founded upon his intimate knowledge of the position and perils of the Empire.* Like Pericles, and other wise men somewhat similarly placed, he said, "Attempt no further conquest. Strengthen the frontiers of the Empire, but do not seek to advance them. Herein lies the secret of your strength. The wider the circuit to be defended, the weaker the defence." His successors were wise enough to accept this counsel in the main. With the exception of the injudicious annexation of Britain by Claudius, few permanent additions were made to the dominion which they received from his hands, and these were either forced acquisitions in the shape of lapsed or rebellious monarchies, or illustrations of the sagacity of his advice. This patient travail of Augustus was not without its reward. He established a coherent power, which for a long time resisted the downward tendency of Roman society, the imbecility and wickedness of the succeding Cæsars, and the assaults of the new enemy from without. This modified success has, in the long revolutions of opinion, produced a somewhat singular result. The government which he constructed, or rather consolidated in himself, has appeared to some of our contemporaries to be

* Tacitus, Ann. i. 12, ii. 61; Agricola, 13.

the type of all good government, and they do not hesitate to recommend something of the kind to ourselves as a species of provisional discipline, calculated to rescue the nation, as it rescued Rome, from the evils of the age, and ultimately fit our people for the task of conducting their own affairs under free institutions.* Perhaps the remark of Gibbon, that the world was never happier than during the period which followed the death of Domitian; perhaps, also, a little unconscious admiration of the unscrupulous triumphs achieved by modern Imperialism, has emboldened this new Cæsarean party to profess a doctrine which they would scarcely have deduced from the ability of the administration, the virtues of the rulers, or the happiness of the people during the period in which this type of all good government was developing itself under the Julian race. But even though we concede the merit of the "good emperors," as they are called, who followed the last of the legitimate Cæsars, and grant that in the second century a temporary pause occurred in the most virulent symptoms of the state disease, it is still open for us to ask, as it has been asked,—If the Empire was really the type of all good government, how and why did it fall into a decadence and ultimate decay, which is the significant result of all bad government? Nay rather, had it been the worst, instead of the best of all possible governments, could it have failed in all the objects of government more signally, and exhibited more fatal decrepitude and incapacity? Many of the evils, perhaps most of the evils, which beset society are not chargeable upon any government—

> "Of all the ills that human hearts endure,
> How small the part that laws or kings can cure."

But "absolute power, wielded by perfect virtue and wisdom," to adopt Gibbon's statement, contracts a greater responsibility than other more limited authorities. It is bound to

* See note at the end of the Lecture.

show that it understands the real evils of its age, and that it has a tendency, or at the least an intention, to correct them. But it cannot be asserted that the imperial rule ever appreciated, or ever showed the slightest inclination to remedy, the enormous evils under which Roman society, and, indeed, we may say all ancient society, was slowly and surely succumbing. These evils were irreligion, immorality, and superstition, developed in the grossest forms. Everywhere we find entire indifference to the sanctions and influence of religion, such as in earlier and purer days it existed among the men and matrons of ancient Rome; sensuality pervading all classes and conditions of society; licentiousness rampant from the Palatine to the Suburra. We see a cruel thirst for blood fostered and fed by those sanguinary spectacles of the circus and arena for which the Roman populace raged with an ever-unsatisfied appetite; and we can lay our hand upon one fatal plague-spot which ate away the very vitals of the commonwealth,—the canker of predial and domestic slavery pervading Italy, and gradually consuming the middle class, the very pith and marrow of states. And as the mixed cause and consequence of these things, we can clearly trace the demoralization of domestic manners, destroying the life of the family, the only true basis of a national life, and creating everywhere a miserable individualism, and an entire absorption of men and women in mere personal and selfish interests. Corruption, whether morally or physically viewed, is a disintegrating power, and where, by its influence, society is broken up into separate atoms, patriotism becomes impossible. Then is seen that terrible phenomenon, the loss of a national life, the final and fatal curse of a people, foretelling its doom as certainly as though the sentence of destiny had glared forth in letters of fire upon the wall. This it was which befell Cæsarean and imperial Rome. She may have had wise laws, able administrators, many ingenious expedients against decay,

gold to buy barbarian blood, and fortress piled on fortress by the Danube and the Rhine; but she had not *life*. It was this, and no mere change of policy or external accident, which converted the Empire into a brothel and a slaughter-house in the reign of Nero and Domitian, which brought it to the hammer upon the death of Pertinax, and finally delivered it over as a prey to the bow and spear of the Ostrogoth and the Lombard.

One influence there was which might have made "the dry bones live." One power there was which might have breathed the breath of life into this corpse-like and corrupting form, even as the prophet stretched himself upon the dead body of the widow's child, and called back the spirit that had fled. But we can never forget that the government of the Cæsars persecuted the men who wielded this power—the purest, and, even in a political sense, the most useful which the world had ever known. Imperialism placed itself in an attitude of uncompromising antagonism to the religion of Christ. It drove those who adopted it to prosecute their worship in tombs, and caves, and catacombs, and desert places of the earth: by an exquisite refinement of cruelty, it kindled their bodies as torches to light the streets of Rome, or gave them over to be rent piecemeal by beasts of prey, to make sport for the rabble of the circus and the Suburra. And it was especially the model men who did this; the able administrators, the possessors "of perfect wisdom and absolute power." The more wise and politic the ruler, the more bitter the persecution. The *laissez faire* of the first imperial sensualists conceded a sort of contemptuous toleration to the followers of the new faith: the energy and policy of Diocletian strove to drown it in a torrent of blood, and would certainly have succeeded, had not God and Destiny been stronger than a tyrant's sword.

The causes at which I have briefly hinted, without doubt, were the main agents in producing the downfall of heathenism

and of Rome, and thereby the rise of modern society. But as this matter is all-important, both to the general student and to our own special purpose, it will be desirable to examine these causes with a little more minuteness. The birth-throes mingled with the agonies of death, and he who would read the features and the fate of the strangely-engendered child, must gaze fixedly on both.

And first, with respect to that mixture of atheism and superstition from which, as from a fountain, flowed the full tide of Roman corruption, the student of history will have no difficulty in detecting its source, and tracing the direction of its current. The religion of early Rome was Paganism in its most favourable form. It was simple, earnest, and pure; it had for its basis the domestic relations, and these it transferred to the relations between man and the object of his worship. Thus the fatherhood and protecting power of a Divine Being seems to have been the thought underlying its religious institutions, and reproducing itself in the laws of the state, as in the habits of family life. The grand old Capitolian Jove, who from the heights of the Capitol kept watch and ward over the destinies of Rome, was a being very different from any among the fanciful creations of Greek mythology. It would be easy to point out the distinctive character of the other earlier Italian divinities, did time permit; but this, I think, may be assumed as beyond the chance of controversy. Niebuhr, perhaps the first of all authorities, emphatically declares, "The old Romans were governed by a religion of the strictest veracity, fidelity, and honour;" and he adds, "This was the foundation upon which the greatness of the old republican time was reared, and the whole life of the constitution depended upon it." For a profound and eloquent examination of the principle upon which this religion was based, and the method of its development in public and private life, I must refer you to the lectures of Mr. Maurice, on the Religion of Rome. One passage only I will permit

myself to quote, because it so strongly sets forth the truth, so far as with my powers and opportunities for reflection I have been enabled to see it.

"Forget, as we are privileged to do, all about a Trojan colony and a Trojan war, all that merely belonged to the vanity of the Julian family, the want of documents, the carelessness of investigation, and then consider what is implied in the story of a man bearing his father out of the ruins of a fallen city, and coming to Latium, after perils by sea and land, with his household gods. Consider those words 'Household Gods' in this connection, and then ask yourselves whether this is a mere tale, illustrating the dry moral, that it is proper for sons to take care of their fathers, or whether it does not give us a glimpse into the meaning of the reverence for fathers, of the authority of fathers,—whether it does not tell us whence that reverence and authority were derived—how they were sustained. Was there not a belief in the Roman such as did not dwell in any other Pagan nation, that there was a fatherly government in the highest region of all, which was implied in the very existence of the household; upon which the permanence of all household relations depended; upon which, therefore, all civil relations, all civil order, and not less the military order, the authority and subjection of the camp, ultimately depended?"

Under the shadow of such a faith grew up the great fabric of Roman glory. With the fall of that faith fell also the probity and valour by which empire had been won, and eventually the Empire itself. And the process is intelligible enough. The Pantheism of the East, with all its attendant evils, poured into Rome at the close of the second Punic war. I speak of the Oriental worships rather than of Greek polytheism, because, though the influence of the latter was undoubtedly mischievous, it was less extensively and less permanently so than the superstitious practices

introduced from Syria and Egypt. Conquest produced corruption; and corruption found a people prepared by the sudden wants of newly-acquired wealth to welcome all the means and appliances, intellectual as well as physical, which minister to sensual enjoyment. Were I specially treating of Roman history, it would be my duty to illustrate the fact from Roman literature; and this might be very easily, though not perhaps very briefly done. I will, however, only quote a single passage,—a very remarkable passage, as it seems to me; for it shows at how early a period had begun the evils of which I speak, and how soon was sown the seed which produced so sad a harvest in the days Sylla, Catiline, and Cæsar. "The longer," says Livy, speaking of the second Punic war, "the contest was protracted, and continual successes and defeats varied not only the fortunes of the war, but the feelings of the combatants, in such proportion did superstition, and that mainly of foreign origin, invade the state; so that either the people themselves, or their divinities, seemed to have been suddenly transformed. Nor was it in secret only, and within the walls of private dwelling-houses, that Roman rites were abolished. In public, in the forum and the Capitol, were seen crowds of women who neither made offerings nor prayed to the gods after their country's custom. Sacrificing priests and seers had gained dominion over the minds of men, and the number of the deluded was augmented by the rural population, who had crowded into the capital from their fields, which continued warfare had left uncultivated or in possession of the enemy."* Thus deeply had the East invaded the ancient faith three centuries before the time when Juvenal uttered his bitter complaint: "Long ago has the Syrian Orontes poured its waters into the Roman Tiber." And foreign philosophy was at hand to do for more cultivated minds what foreign superstition did for

* Livy, xxv. 1. See also xxxix. 10.

the vulgar. The time and manner of the great advent of Epicureanism are distinctly marked by Cicero and Livy.* The new doctrine, he tells us, came in like a flood in the train of a Greek, and presently contaminated all the old Roman habits of thinking and ways of life. The result I will give you in the words of a great man :—"The Roman patriciate, trained in the conquest and government of the civilized world, in spite of the tyrannical vices which sprung from that training, were raised by the greatness of their objects to an elevation of genius and character unmatched by any other aristocracy, at the moment when, after preserving their power by a long course of wise compromise with the people, they were betrayed by the army and the populace into the hands of a single tyrant of their own order—the most accomplished of usurpers, and, if humanity and justice could for a moment be silenced, one of the most illustrious of men. There is no scene in history so memorable as that in which Cæsar mastered a nobility of which Lucullus and Hortensius, Sulpicius and Catullus, Pompey and Cicero, Brutus and Cato, were members."† Augustus, though himself a libertine, made serious efforts to arrest the evil tendencies towards atheism and immorality which had been gathering strength ever since the civil war. But the habit had become inveterate. Indeed, the very success of the policy of assimilation, in accordance with which Rome recognized the divinities of the vanquished, and was in most cases ready to welcome them to her temples, necessarily led to an utter confusion of religious systems, and a contempt for religious creeds. Where Rome found an uncompromising belief, she crushed it, as she crushed Druidism in Gaul, and Judaism in the East. Christianity she could neither trample out nor conciliate, though we are told that she offered a place in her Pantheon to the

* Livy, x. 10.
† Sir J. Macintosh, Introduction to Ethical Philosophy.

Christian's God. And in this "lowest deep" of infidelity was found "a lower deep" of sensualism and crime, unknown to human nature, except as it existed in the courtiers and contemporaries of the Cæsarean princes. What wonder, then, that Gibbon should be enabled to say: "The philosopher" — that is, the man who thought and reasoned — "believed every religion false;" for religion was, in the words of Champagny, 'corrupted by base admixtures, breached by the assaults of reason, without dignity, authority, or consistency.'" But Gibbon also says: "The people believed all religions to be equally true." And to a certain extent he is right. He is right, if he meant that in the common mind the religious instinct is indestructible, and comes out alike under every possible phase of social being. The consciousness of a nature which sins, in combination with the consciousness of a superior power in the universe, to whom sin is hateful, inspires men with a vague terror, and a vague hope to propitiate the anger which they dread, and to work out for themselves deliverance from the penalties which they feel to be impending over their heads. The operation of this instinct in a corrupt age is superstition; and the superstition becomes more gross, sanguinary, and abominable, in proportion to the ignorance and depravity of the people among whom it reigns. And so it comes to pass that an age intellectually debased and sensualized, is one which greedily grasps at the counterfeits and cheats with which false religions are ever ready to beguile the fears of men. Such was the age of the Cæsars. It was emphatically an age of superstition, — a time of dreams, divinations, omens, talismans, prodigies, astrology, necromancy, and witchcraft. Rome is graphically described by a contemporary as an "epitome of all superstitions." The streets and public places teemed with the votaries, ministers, and ensigns of foreign gods; dark-skinned daughters

of Isis, with drum and timbrel and wanton mien; devotees of the Persian Mithras, imported by the Pompeians from Cilicia; emasculated Asiatics; priests of Berecynthian Cybele, with their wild dances and discordant cries; worshipers of "the great goddess Diana," the many-breasted Ephesian Artemis, type of material Nature, so different from the chaste huntress goddess of Greece, or the rustic Italian spouse of Djanus; here and there some barbarian captive or hostage fresh from the gloomy rites of Teuton forests or Scandinavian isles; Syrians, Jews, Chaldean astrologers, and Thessalian sorcerers. The leading writers of even the Augustan age abound with reference to the rites and practices of magic, and their tone in respect of them is more credulous than sceptical. It would be a waste of time to enumerate instances from the later literature of the Empire. But even the bold Dictator, unbeliever and libertine as he was, recounts, with the utmost apparent confidence, the prodigies which announced the victory of Pharsalia, and never mounted a vehicle without reciting a magic form of words to preserve him from accident. The biographer of Augustus devotes several consecutive chapters to an account of his various superstitions; from which we learn that he was horribly alarmed at thunder and unlucky days, and attributed a revolt in the provinces to the portentous circumstance of his having put on his left shoe before his right.* Tiberius, who was especially an *esprit fort*, and affected a contempt for the gods, like Louis the Eleventh of France, whom in some respects he greatly resembled, alternately consulted the astrologers, and persecuted them for their predictions. We are also told that he wore a laurel garland on his brows to protect himself from the effects of lightning; and the picture drawn by Juvenal and Tacitus of the hoary tyrant seated on his island rock, and surrounded by the ministers

* Suetonius, Vit. Aug.

of his lust, cruelty, and superstition, is as revolting a portraiture as all history affords. But these things were not confined to weak men, or wicked men haunted by the terrors of accusing conscience. Men of the highest eminence in letters, unstained by the contamination of their age, succumbed to similar delusions. Pliny, the naturalist, whose studies ought to have emancipated him from some vulgar prejudices at any rate, was among the most credulous and superstitious of human beings. His pages are full of grotesque marvels, and old wives' tales about divining-stones, individuals who have changed their sex, the cure of serpent-bites by the saliva of a fasting man, and other cures by incantations and magic words. He is great on the subject of teeth, informing us, with perfect faith, that an infant born with teeth is sure to attain distinction; that an additional tooth assures the possession of longevity; that a lady gifted with two eye-teeth is born to fortune; with many other equally veracious and important facts, which the curious may discover in his great work on Natural History. The sombre genius of Lucan, imbued with a melancholy fatalism, rebelled against God and Providence, but succumbed to a belief in Thessalian sorceresses, who could draw the labouring moon from her course and convulse the elements. Nor was Tacitus himself, despite his stern nature and philosophic creed, proof against the weaknesses of his generation. He evidently regarded with contempt the theory of a divine government of the universe, but seems inclined to attach importance to presages and dreams.

When such was the effect of superstition on superior minds, it is easy to conjecture the intellectual condition of the vulgar. With the latter, it produced the fruits which superstition always produces, in all ages and among all people—debasement of intellect and licentiousness of life. With the former, it commonly resulted in fatalism, and the logical conclusion of fatalism—suicide. Suicide under the

imperial dynasty was too common, and too much in accordance with the spirit of the age, to excite either censure or surprise. And it is a melancholy reflection, that, practically speaking, in suicide culminated all that religion and philosophy had for so many centuries been teaching the ancient world. It has been well called "le dernier mot d'antiquité;" and in that last despairing utterance the moralist may read the impotence of human wisdom, the decadence of heathenism, and the fall of Rome.*

So far with respect to the first point — the mingled atheism and superstition of the Cæsarean age. On the second and kindred topic of its social demoralization, those who have any acquaintance with the subject well know that it is impossible for me to enlarge. And, indeed, it would be a painful task to extract from records and contemporary writers a truthful picture of its social life. That picture may be found in the pages of Juvenal, Suetonius, Tacitus, Seneca, and other less-known authors. But those whose duty has led them to the examination, will be most reluctant to unveil the lineaments of the portrait to the common eye. Thus much, however, it is perhaps right to say: The virtues of domestic life are the true safeguards of society, "the cheap defence of nations," in a sense more real than that in which our great statesman employed the words. These had been poisoned at their source. The Roman mother—

> "Clarum et venerabile nomen,
> Gentibus, et nostræ quod multum profuit urbi"—

had been the main agent in forming that simple, stern, unbending Roman character, which awed the world by its integrity, and subdued it by its force. "Corruptio optimi est pessima," says a clear-sighted philosopher; and the condition of female morals and manners at the court of the Roman emperors, and in the social circles of the capital, offers, I will be bold

* See especially Seneca de Provid. § 6, Epp. 70, 77, 78.

to say, the most incredible instance of debasement which the history of civilized nations records. God forbid that we should sin against the common charities of humanity, by forming our judgment of the state of society, among any people, from the bitter criminations of a satirist; but the fact that the sixth satire of Juvenal should have been possible, even in conception; that it should have had such a basis of truth as to account for its being written or read; that it should have contained enough life and reality to prevent its being condemned to instant oblivion, as the dream of a diseased imagination, is enough to brand the generation of women whom it describes with eternal infamy. And, unhappily, it does not stand alone. There are patent facts in the history, the legislation, the literature of the time, which forbid us to discredit its general assertions. Adultery, divorce, poisoning, infanticide, gluttony, debauchery of the most extravagant kind, shameless abandonment of the dignity and functions of their sex;—as, for instance, appearance in gladiatorial costume in the arena, before the dregs of the Roman populace;—utter carelessness as to the training of their offspring, physical, intellectual, and moral;—these are the crimes of which history accuses the daughters of Lucretia, Clœlia, and Cornelia; and, unfortunately, history is too well able to support the charge. Look, for a moment, at some of the great social questions with which our own age is most busily employed, not for the sake of unfruitful speculation, but because long experience has shown that upon their satisfactory settlement the welfare of a country mainly depends. What can we say, for instance, of the state of education in the Empire? On this subject we naturally have recourse to the authority of Quintilian. Quintilian was something of a pedant, and a good deal of a rhetorician. We shall, therefore, have some allowance to make for prejudice, and some for exaggeration. But in the main he was an honest man, and an

experinced teacher. What is his testimony? "Pray heaven," he says, "we ruin not the morals of our own children ourselves. Their earliest infancy we corrupt with luxury. That indulgent style of education which we call 'spoiling' (*quam indulgentiam vocamus*) destroys the energies both of body and soul. What will be the appetites of the youth whose infancy is reared on purple? Before the child can talk, he understands all about the merits of the cook; he calls for delicacies. We educate their palates before we teach them how to speak. They grow up upon luxurious couches: soon as they can walk they are supported on either side by the hands of their attendants. We are delighted if they are impudent and immodest in their prattle. Language which is inadmissible in the lowest ribaldry of Egypt, we receive with laughter and caresses. And no wonder: we have taught them; they have heard it from us. They are permitted to see our mistresses, our courtesans. At every dinner-party they listen to licentious songs; they see sights which it is a shame even to mention. Hence is engendered custom,—a custom which becomes second nature. And the worst of it is, that the unfortunates learn these vices before they know them to be vices."* So far Quintilian; but we may produce another witness of graver authority. It is thus that the philosophic Tacitus—for, despite of adverse criticism, we believe the Dialogue "de Oratoribus" to be his—describes the education of his contemporaries:—"What is our present practice? The infant is committed to some wretched creature in the shape of a Greek chambermaid, who is assisted in her task by a slave or two, generally the very worst in the whole household, and unfit for the discharge of any office of trust. From the fables, and worse than idle tales of these people, the tender and untaught mind of the child receives its earliest colouring. There is no

* Quintilian, de Instit. Orator. I. ii. 6—8.

a single person in the whole household who troubles himself in the slightest degree about what he says or does before his youthful master. Nay, the very parents themselves, so far from habituating their young children to modesty and propriety, teach them licentiousness and freedom of speech, from which, by slow degrees, there creeps upon them a habit of impudence and want of due respect either for themselves or for others. In these days the patronage of actors, the passion for horses and gladiators, that special and peculiar vice of our age and city, seems, if I may say so, impressed upon infants in the very womb of their mothers; and when once the mind has been beset and taken possession of by things like these, what room is left for honourable pursuits; what else is the subject of conversation in the domestic circle? If we enter our schools, what else do we hear our boys talking about? Nay, this is the most usual and popular topic with which even the teachers amuse their pupils. It is not by strictness of discipline, or by affording practical proof of their ability, that these people get together their classes: it is done by canvassing about from house to house, by flattery and humbug (*ambitione salutantium et illecebris adulationis*). To say nothing of elementary instruction, upon which hardly any pains are bestowed, no sufficient amount of labour is spent in forming an acquaintance with good authors, in the careful study of history, in acquiring an adequate knowledge of men, or times, or things. The whole object of education is to make what they call rhetoricians."* It is needless to mar the effect of this admirable sketch by superfluous commentary. It is, however, perhaps not altogether needless to place it before those who are interested in the education of the 19th century, and who have some acquaintance with the phenomena which it presents.

But look again at the grave question of divorce—a ques-

* Auctor Dialogi de Oratoribus, c. 29.

tion concerning which it is not too much to say, that it forms an excellent test of the inclination of a people to carry the principles of morality into the practice of legislation. In the earlier and better days of the Republic, divorce was almost unknown; before its close, it was of daily occurrence. The servile poets of the Augustan age, taking their cue from the imperial policy of reformation, were loud in their condemnation of an evil which it does not appear that they were personally very anxious to amend. But their language proves the prevalence of the facts which they decry. Instances, indeed, are innumerable. The great Cato considered it a commendable proceeding to transfer his wife Marcia to his friend Hortensius; and when Hortensius died, leaving the lady a very handsome jointure, Cato was delighted to take her back,—a transaction which the epic poet Lucan extols, from beginning to end, in the most magniloquent terms. Mæcenas, the minister of Augustus, despite of his master's zeal for the reformation of senatorial morals, repudiated and re-married his wife a dozen times. Nay, even Augustus himself dissolved, without scruple, his own marriage, and the marriages of other members of his family, simply from motives of expediency. "It is impossible to say," writes his biographer Suetonius, "whether the marriages of Caligula were more disgracefully contracted, continued, or broken off." These examples, as might have been anticipated, were freely imitated by the aristocracy. "No gazette appears," says Seneca, "without the announcement of a divorce;" that is to say, one at least was published every day. "The women marry," he complains, "simply for the sake of being repudiated." Martial's Telesina was just about to be married to her tenth husband. Well may the poet exclaim: "She who marries so often does not marry, but becomes adulteress by law." I will not dwell upon what must be familiar to every scholar. Painful and de-

testable as all this is, there is worse behind. Divorce is, at any rate, a recognition in some sort of the existence and claims of a moral law. The wild debauchery of a Messalina, imitated by too many a Roman matron; the license of men like the Cæsarean emperors, with power as unlimited as their passions; the orgies enacted upon the Palatine Hill; the very traditions, ceremonies, and practices of religion, as they affected the female sex; the abominations of foreign mysteries and worships; these are things which it is impossible to describe; but they must be taken into account by any one who professes to form a just judgment upon society under the Empire. It was of the men of this time and place that an inspired apostle drew that memorable and terrible picture which, for the honour of our common humanity, were it lawful, we would fain forget. But there remains an abiding impression of a state of things which no patriotism of good men, no policy of wise men, could remedy or remove. The vaunted perfection of external organization could no more restore life to such a people, than any machinery, however ingenious, could restore motion to a corpse. "The dissolution of domestic manners," as Mr. Maurice most admirably says, "was the curse of all curses, which the utmost official diligence, had it descended from the highest ruler to the governor of every province, and to the centurion of every cohort, could not have removed."* I shall not enlarge upon the corruption of imperial society: yet so many reflections crowd upon the mind, as it depicts to itself a spectacle so strange, that we cannot altogether dismiss them from the thoughts. What varied characters fill up the social stage, of which scarce any modern counterparts remain! At the summit of the whole social fabric, the Emperor, raised to a position and gifted with an authority unknown to any human being before or since, wielding almost the power of a God, and for the most part

* Lecture iii. p. 389.

demeaning himself as a Demon. Think of the nature of that power,—absolute, irresponsible, unrestrained by moral influences, and so capriciously exercised, that the life and property of no man, the virtue and fair fame of no woman, were safe from it for an hour. Then the servile Senator, trembling at the frown of this earthly and earthy divinity, in hourly dread of confiscation or the executioner, and either drowning the few uncertain hours of life which the Informer left him in the deepest sensuality, or, as a contemporary has bitterly said, "flying to suicide for fear of death;" the Informer incessantly plying his business of blood, gorged with the plunder of noble houses, and stealthily selecting his next victim with judicious reference to the secret wishes of his master,—a more terrible image of evil power than the Emperor himself; the Poisoner making profitable traffic of the potent drug by which an enemy, or more frequently a husband or parent, might be converted into a blackened corpse, and carried out to burial in a few short hours,—a Locusta anticipating by centuries the diabolical skill of a Borgia or Brinvilliers; the Pantomimists, before whose artistic perfections popularity, wealth, extravagance, and vice, our modern artistes "must pale" their, not very "ineffectual fires," dowered with the riches of a province, and bestowing provinces and offices of state themselves, and at whose morning *levée* emperors, senators, noble ladies, grave lawyers, and wealthy citizens, contended for the honour of a smile. The picture has also its ridiculous figures, if anything can be ridiculous which bears its part in so melancholy a drama: the bustling Client, scrambling and fighting with his fellows for a good place in his patron's audience-chamber, ready to go anywhere, do anything, or submit to anything, at his bidding, and only solicitous about acquiring for himself an ample share in the dole of food, which, by a strange relic of ancient custom, the great man still supplied to the struggling multitude who now abused the character of the

once sacred relation of the "Clientela;" the Fortune-hunter, practising a profession which nothing but the entire disruption of family ties and affections could have rendered possible, haunting the houses of all the heirless wealthy, but especially those of well-dowered widows; nay, if we may credit Juvenal, even those establishments where the presence of "a prattling nest" of expectant inheritors might have inspired him with despair,—conciliating favour, and purchasing the chance of mention in a will by a thousand degrading offices and ridiculous *petits soins;* the Parasite intriguing, and sometimes even battling, for a place at the well-loaded tables of those who could afford to dine,—an importation from Greece, but one which had lost the wit and gracefulness of Greece, and substituted for it nothing but an impudent and obscene buffoonery. These, and many other types of individuality, have passed away with the mutation of manners and the course of time; but they must not pass away from our recollection, if we would estimate aright the state of Roman society under Cæsarean government.

Two figures even yet remain behind — two figures of terrible significance to the future destinies of the Empire, — the Gladiator and the Slave. The gladiatorial combats were, above all things else, the distinctive characteristics of Rome. Rome, in her fallen days, without virtue, without faith, without trust in her gods or in herself, loved, believed in, deified one idol still, — Homicide. The butcheries of the amphitheatre exerted a charm upon the minds of men, for which literature, art, philosophy, religion, and the simple enjoyments of domestic life were flung aside. Existence became a frightful phantasmagoria—an alternation of debauch and blood. The practice itself can be traced back to one of the darkest superstitions of the human mind. It originated in the barbarous instinct which leads the savage to sacrifice his victim upon the tomb of the dead as a satisfaction, and, perhaps, as an attendant,

upon the departed spirit. The example, from whatsoever source derived, was first set to the Roman people by Marcus and Decimus Brutus, who matched together gladiators in the Forum Boarium, for the purpose of casting unprecedented *éclat* upon the obsequies of their father, B.C. 264. The seed fell upon fruitful ground, for it soon grew and ripened into a harvest more destructive than the dragon's teeth of Grecian fable. The wealth and ingenuity of the Roman aristocracy were taxed to the uttermost to content the populace and provide food for the indiscriminate slaughter of the circus, where brute fought with brute, and man with man, or where the skill and weapons of the latter were matched against the strength and ferocity of the first. In one day, Pompey poured six hundred lions into the arena. Augustus delighted the multitude with the sight of four hundred and twenty panthers. Twenty elephants, Pliny tells us, contended against a band of six hundred Getulian captives. The games given by Trajan lasted for more than one hundred and twenty days. Ten thousand gladiators descended to combat, and more than ten thousand beasts were slain. Titus, that "delight of the human race," had upwards of five thousand animals slaughtered in a single day. Every corner of the earth was ransacked for some strange creature whose appearance was hailed with frantic applause by the spectators. We hear of camelopards, white elephants, and the rhinoceros. Scaurus produced upon the stage an hippopotamus and five crocodiles. Game of the nobler sorts became scarce. The Roman populace was as indignant with those who in any way damaged its supplies, as the country sportsman is with a poacher or with the unlucky culprit who has made away with a fox. In the time of Theodosius it was forbidden by law to destroy a Getulian lion, even in self-defence. But the death-agonies of the wild animals of the desert were too tame a spectacle to satisfy the Roman thirst for blood. It was when man

strove with man, and when all that human strength and skill, increased by elaborate training, and taxed to the uttermost, could do, was put forth before their unrelenting eyes, that the transport of their sanguinary enthusiasm was at its height. It is impossible to describe the aspect of the amphitheatre at such a time. The audience became frantic with excitement; they rose from their seats; they yelled; they shouted their applause, as one blow more ghastly than another was dealt by lance, or sword, or dagger, and the life-blood spouted forth. "*Hoc habet*"—"*he has it*," "*he has it*"—was the cry which burst from ten thousand throats, and was re-echoed, not only by a debased and brutalized populace, but by the lips of royalty, by purple-clad senators and knights, by noble matrons, and even by those consecrated maids whose presence elsewhere saved the criminal from his fate, but whose function here it was to consign the suppliant to his doom, by reversing the thumb, upon his appeal for mercy. His blood was soon licked up by the thirsty sand, or concealed beneath the sawdust sprinkled ovér it by the ready attendant; his body dragged hastily from the stage by an iron hook, and flung into a gory pit; his existence forgotten, and his place supplied by another and yet another victim, as the untiring work of death went on. And we must remember that these things were not done casually, or under the influence of some strange fit of popular frenzy. They were done purposely, systematically, and calmly: they formed the staple amusement, I had almost said the normal employment of a whole people, whose one audible cry was for "panem et Circenses"—"bread and blood." Neither were they fostered by the brutalized habits and associations which surround the cock-pit or the prize-ring. When men were "butchered to make a Roman holiday," it was among all the delicate appliances of the most refined sensualism. An awning, gorgeous with purple and gold, excluded the rays of the

midday sun; sweet strains of music floated in the air, drowning the cries of death; the odour of Syrian perfumes overpowered the scent of blood; the eye was feasted by the most brilliant scenic decoration, and amused by elaborate machinery; and, as a crowning degradation to the whole, the Paphian chamber of the courtesan arose beside the bloody den into which were flung the mangled bodies of men and brutes. Such things seem impossible to those who live beneath a civilization which Christianity has influenced, however imperfectly, by its presence. And, indeed, it needs much,—the concurrent testimony of poet, historian, and philosopher; the ruins of a hundred amphitheatres before our eyes; the frescoes of the Museo Borbonico; the very programmes of the performance, which something higher than accident has preserved; the incidental witness of an inspired apostle,—it needs all this to convince us of their truth. But they are true, undisputed facts of history, and facts which carry with them no obscure intimation of the reasons which worked the fall of the imperial city. They prove that she deserved to fall, and by the hands of those in whose persons she had outraged humanity. It was not a poet remarkable for overstraining the religious sentiment of divine retribution, who wrote—

> "Shall he expire,
> And unavenged? Arise, ye Goths! and glut your ire."

The gladiator, whether directly a captive or a refractory slave, was generally the child of those races who wreaked, in after-times, a bloody vengeance upon the city of blood. And if her own degenerate sons, freedman, knight, or senator, nay, even her degraded daughters, descended into the arena and combated by his side, this could only bespeak her more entire debasement and unfitness to direct the destinies of the world. Gibbon, meditating by moonlight on his immortal work amid the ruins of the Coliseum, has

ever affected the student's imagination with a sentiment akin to the sublime. Would it do so in a less degree, had that great man more clearly seen in the colossal ruin, vast as the memory, and sombre as the destiny of the eternal city, something more significant than the shadowy symbol of her fall? Is it not the enduring witness of her shame; the sepulchral-stone which marks her grave, inscribed with the record of her darkest crimes?

But the Gladiator had a kinsman in misery, oftentimes more wretched than himself, a twin supporter of the blazoned honours of the imperial shield—the Slave. His feet in fetters; his arms in chains; his countenance branded with a hot iron, the slave toiled by day to cultivate those historic fields which once employed the sinews of the sturdy Sabine and Samnite rustics; who were in former times the pride of the republican legions, and more than once the saviours of the state; and at night, the Ergastulum awaited his weary limbs, with its iron manacles, its scourges, and subterranean cells.

We speak of the perils of modern proletarianism, and we have cause; but what modern proletariat ever merited the title of the "dangerous classes" as truly as these men of hopeless life and brutalized nature? Strange, however, to say, they formed the staple of the Italian population. They had altogether superseded the hardy peasantry who, in other days, tended their little farms from the crests of the Apennines to either sea; upon them the capital depended for such sustenance as it did not derive from Sicily or Africa; by their hands the rich man's villa was reared with the dimensions and splendour of a palace; by them his thousand acres of pleasure-ground, his vast groves of myrtle, his fields of violets, and spacious fishponds, were formed and kept in order; by them the countless appliances of his luxury produced. Between him and themselves stood no intermediate class—nothing but a nicely-graduated

hierarchy of servitude; to him they were less than the brute creatures on his estate—more useful, but quite as noxious as the hungry wolves who prowled about its desolated confines. I do not, of course, mean that all slaves were of the agricultural class, or all in the same degraded position. There was, as I have said, a regular gradation in their social standing, from the beautiful Greek or Asiatic youth, the spoilt minion of his master, to the "servant of servants," who discharged the most menial duties of the household or the farm. The secretary or amanuensis was a slave; the son's tutor and attendants were slaves; the artistes, who in various ways ministered to the great man's enjoyment, were all slaves. Physicians, actors, musical performers, the buffoon and the improvisator, were of the same order. So were the skilled artisans of every kind. The slave engrossed the functions of labour and intelligence; what remained for the freedman and the citizen? What indeed! The answer is to be found in the nature of their daily life, of which the most prominent feature has been sketched above. We might proceed to fill up the details, and conduct your imaginations through one unvarying round of frivolity and debauch; but I have surely said enough. We know something of the character of this society, and, being what it was, how could it last? How could it survive the day of trial, when it had spent the days of its security in rearing up within itself a fatal antagonism to its own existence? Perhaps a complete answer to these questions could only be obtained by fully investigating the subject of Roman slavery; and this, of course, cannot be done here. Yet it is impossible to discern aright the birth of modern society in modern history, without correct notions upon this matter; for, assuredly, out of the relations which had gradually grown up between the free and the slave population arose the weakness of the Empire; and in the weakness of the Empire lay the secret of the strength of her

barbarian foes, who swept down upon her prostrate form, like vultures from every wind of heaven upon their prey. Two facts must, at any rate, ever be borne in mind. First, the immense and ever-increasing number of the slave class; secondly, the impolitic and irrational inhumanity of the treatment which they received. The inferences to be drawn from these facts will be patent enough. Now, as regards the first, when we think of the unlimited scale upon which the Romans were perpetually prosecuting war, and remember the countless captives whose destiny every battle must have placed in their hands, we can have no difficulty in appreciating the exhaustless fertility of the source from which their slaves were principally derived. The slave-dealer waited on the eagles as regularly as the vulture or the wolf, and obtained his victims at nearly as cheap a rate. Their number, however, was swelled from other sources, as birth, judicial sentence, regular trading and kidnapping. We hear of a permanent slave-trade, with its constant supplies and fixed entrepôts, such as Delos, where ten thousand were known to have been sold in a single day. Many came from the European shores of the Euxine, but still greater numbers from Asia Minor and Africa. Some unfortunate nationalites, Thracians, Lydians, Phrygians, Cappadocians, and Cretans, appear to have passed at a very early period into a synonyme for slave. In addition to the regular slaves, the Romans cultivated their land by *coloni partiarii*, as they were called, to whom was apportioned a slight share of the harvest, and who appear to have more nearly approached the condition of the mediæval serf. But, practically speaking, there was but little difference between the two classes. "In order to oblige the last," says Sismondi, "to content themselves with the least possible share, they were attached to the land, and nearly as much oppressed as the slaves themselves."* Of the whole number

* Sismondi, Hist. Ital. Rep. ch. 1.

existing at any one time, either under the Republic or the Empire, we can only form a vague guess. But that it must have been enormous, may be conjectured from several well-known circumstances. In the servile wars of Sicily, so obstinately contested, a million are computed to have perished. With Spartacus, who has been emphatically called "the Messiah of the slave," no less than sixty thousand fell after the sanguinary strife in which he was defeated by Crassus. Many incidental notices by the writers of the Augustan age and of the Empire may assist our calculation. Horace regarded two hundred as a suitable establishment for what we should call a gentleman. Nero's prefect, Pedanius Secundus, maintained four hundred in his house; Scaurus is said to have had four thousand, and C. C. Claudius Isodorus, a freedman in the time of Augustus, left behind him upwards of four thousand one hundred. The assertion of Athenæus, that many Roman families owned between ten and twenty thousand slaves, is doubtless an exaggeration; but such a one as undoubtedly proves the magnitude of the thing exaggerated. The immense increase in the census of Roman citizens, which had risen from 450,000 under Julius Cæsar to 6,944,000 under Claudius, was mainly attributable to the enfranchisement of the slave class, rendered necessary by considerations of state policy. A complaint was made in the Senate that, were the free men distinguished from the slaves by an external badge, "the free-born would be found in a lamentable minority." "Rome," said Tacitus,* "trembled in the presence of a slave population, which multiplied day by day, while the free population diminished." A vague and jealous terror of a servile insurrection haunted the minds of the best-informed men in Rome, as we may imagine it to haunt the minds of the slave-holding seignors of the southern states of the American Union. If the emperor feared a man, he in-

* Tacitus, Ann. xiii. 27.

stantly suspected him of a design to raise the standard of revolt by holding forth the promise of enfranchisement. In the time of Tiberius, an experiment of the kind was made, which was mainly supported by the shepherds of the Apennines. The terror of the capital was boundless. The attempt was, by great good fortune, put down; but its memory remained as a perpetual menace to society. When it was proposed in the Senate that the slaves should resume their distinctive costume, the proposition was negatived, lest its adoption should reveal to the obnoxious class their numbers and real power. Tiberius himself, "ce grand justicier," that ablest of mere administrators, with statesmanlike perspicacity, placed his finger upon the sores which exhausted the body politic, and clearly pointed out the three great evils of the Empire,—the inability of Italy to support itself with food; the depopulated rural estates; and the tribes of slaves (*servorum nationes*) who occupied the land. And yet it was from this very source that the citizens of the imperial city were recruited. The Roman people, decimated by the tyranny of their rulers and the debauchery of their own lives, would soon have become extinct, had it not, from time to time, been replenished by a hardier race, whom a purer atmosphere, moral as well as physical, permitted to follow the law of natural increase. How then, we may ask, did the dominant class act with this slumbering volcano beneath their feet? How did they bear themselves towards that vast multitude in their streets, and within their doors, more numerous, more energetic and intelligent than themselves, whose very presence was a standing menace to their political and personal existence? What was the character of the relation which they deemed it politic to maintain towards men who, without exaggeration, may be said to have held their destiny in their hands? You will find a sufficient answer to the question in the excellent article upon the Law of Master and Slave written by Mr. G. Long,

for that standard work the "Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities." To that I must refer those who require special information. But one well-known fact will, I think, cast light enough upon the subject to satisfy our present purpose. The law did not look upon the slave even as a personage of subordinate and degraded social position. It did not recognize his claim to be considered as a moral agent, to be a man at all. When the bystander remonstrated with the lady in Juvenal, who was cruelly torturing her slave for some trifling fault, upon the ground that it was shameful so to treat a human being,—"A human being!" she replies, "call you that creature a human being? He is a slave." The law re-echoed, in grave judicial tones, the bitter words of the passionate woman. He was *secundum hominum genus*, a "second sort of human being;" he could acquire no rights, social or political, he was incapable of inheriting property, or making a will, or contracting a legal marriage; his value was estimated like that of a brute beast; his death or mutilation punished in the same way. In one word, he was not a *person*, he was a *thing*. In justice to Roman jurists, it must be admitted that this was no novel view. Such seems to have been the universal sentiment of antiquity. Aristotle, who has never been accused of wanting either good sense or humanity, expressly defines the slave as an *ὄργανον ἔμψυχον*, "an instrument," or "piece of furniture possessed of life." But whatever may have been the theory of the Greek, he did not carry out the practice with the consistent brutality of the Roman slave-holder. Originally, the latter, as master, held absolute command over the person, and even over the life of his slave; neither was protected, in the slightest degree, by law; and no one, I think, can even read over the plays of Plautus without perceiving that some protection was sadly wanted. At a later period, some attempt at legal interference was made, just as an attempt was also made to curb immorality and extrava-

gance, and to restrain the license of the gladiatorial shows. But, as has been justly said in the article to which I have referred, "the general treatment of the slave was probably little affected by legislative enactments." He was his master's property to scourge, to brand, to chain up, to torture, to crucify; nor was it seldom that his master or his mistress exercised this terrible power. The well-known passages of Juvenal will, of course, be accused of exaggeration; but they are borne out in the main by all contemporary literature and by facts. There seems little reason to disbelieve the story of Pollio's fishponds, where the lampreys fattened upon the flesh of slaves, a practice of which the humane Augustus expressed a mild disapproval. Another cruelty, of almost equal enormity, was undoubtedly practised upon the younger and more comely victims of the slave-dealer's cupidity, and the *salons* of Rome were crowded by beings of whom we only think in the seraglios of the East. But, perhaps, the wholesale legal butcheries to which they were subjected indicate, more clearly than anything else, the miserable condition of the class. If a wealthy proprietor died under circumstances which created suspicion of foul play, his whole household, of many hundred slaves, were instantly put to the torture, one and all. Tacitus tells a story, in his graphic way, which brings the abominable character of the law, and the entire unconsciousness of its administrators that it was abominable, most vividly before our eyes. A man of consular rank had been murdered by a slave. Forthwith every slave in his possession was condemned to death, and led out to execution. The cruelty and injustice of the sentence were too glaring even for a Roman mob: some opposition was offered to the officers of justice; the lictors were assaulted in the execution of their duty. The Senate immediately took alarm, and a debate was held upon the subject. A lingering sentiment of humanity called forth even there an attempt to mitigate

the severity of the law. It was instantly overruled by the reasonings of a learned jurist, who quoted precedent, and insinuated the peril which would result from measures of mercy. "There must be some injustice done," said he, "in every great example; but the injustice inflicted upon a few is amply compensated by the benefit to the many."*

I have dwelt at some length upon the condition of the slave population, because the subject is one of infinite importance to our purpose. Michelet has been praised for the "late discovery that slavery caused the fall of the Roman empire." I know not whether he deserves that praise; but you cannot, I think, reflect upon the facts which I have brought forward, without being disposed to agree in his conclusion. There are, however, two or three consequences directly resulting from the state of things described, which it is necessary to see before we can fully understand what is meant by the assertion.

We must remember, in the first place, that the maintenance of a large retinue of slaves was a costly luxury. The death of the proprietor, or the failure of his fortunes, or, again, their own depreciation in utility or value, threw vast numbers of these men from time to time into the proletariat. Destitute and degraded, without a sesterce and without a friend, they swelled the helpless and useless rabble who lived only by the largess of the emperor, and consumed the vitals of the state. Amalgamated in time with the remains of the old plebeian order, and the colluvies of nations which crowded to the capital of the world, they formed a vast multitude whom the Empire could neither elevate in character, employ, feed, or get rid of; and they hung like an incubus upon its destinies.† For, among other evils, they produced this—they necessitated a despotism, and a despotism of the most iron kind, as in our own time absolutism is the offspring of the barricades. "The despotic

* Tacitus, Ann. xiv. 42. † See Livy, xli. 8; Petronius, c. 57.

government," says Count de Champagny, "came to the rescue, as the only possible government, on the one hand, to keep in check these masses of slaves and proletarians irritated by suffering, and, on the other, to coerce beneath a sceptre sanguinary and ignominious, the remains of an aristocracy ambitious, but divided, aspiring after power, and ever ready to raise the ensigns of civil war."*

There was another result, no less grave. A melancholy change had taken place in the condition of Italy since the days when her peasants had been summoned to the head of armies from the plough, and the warlike races who dwelt beneath the shadow of the Apennines lived the free, old, rural life, with their chaste matrons and robust offspring, which the poets loved, not altogether idly, to depict. Rome had been an exacting mother,—her armies conquered the world; but in the process her sons had left their bones to bleach in every climate under heaven. The Italian legionary crossed the sea with his eagles, and spent his life beneath their shade: they were his household gods, his home, his civil polity, his all. From the morasses of Germany and the sands of Syria he rarely returned to visit his paternal fields. And thus the peasant race died out. The massacres of Sylla, and the boundless consumption of human life occasioned by the civil wars, finished the depopulation which a short-sighted policy had begun. Augustus, imitating the example of Sylla, made an attempt to colonize Italy with his discharged soldiery, and occasioned much suffering among the few rustic proprietors who remained. Every educated man in Europe remembers the immortal strains in which Melibœus laments the presence of the rude centurion in his ancestral farm. But the veterans of Pharsalia and Philippi were as little adapted to form an agricultural population as, in all probability, those of Austerlitz and Waterloo would have been. The experiment, if it was intended for one,

* Les Césars, vol. ii. p. 209.

entirely failed. The writers of the age are loud in their lamentations on the depopulation of Italy. Large tracts were left altogether without cultivation, a prey to barrenness and miasma. Even Cicero's letters are filled with complaints respecting the solitude of vast districts, the insalubrity of once healthy localities, the properties of doubtful title altogether abandoned. Strabo informs us that in Samnium, once the most flourishing part of the whole Peninsula, but two towns remained. "The plains once tilled by the sturdy Sabine," says Pliny, "have been delivered over to the branded faces, the fettered feet, and manacled hands of slaves." The lands, where cultivated at all, had fallen into the hands of great proprietors, who indulged their extravagant taste by covering whole districts with piles of building and wildernesses of pleasure-ground. Outside these fantastic realms roamed the wild shepherd of the Apennines, the hunted runaway, and the outlaw, veritable progenitors of the brigand of the Abruzzi. Within toiled the slave, under the superintendence of other slaves, accountable in their turn to the villicus, or bailiff, himself also a slave. "The agriculturists, as well what were called freedmen as slaves, were almost all barbarians by birth, without any interest in a social order, which only oppressed them, without courage for its defence, and without any pecuniary resources for themselves."* No free man wielded mattock or spade, or sped the plough. The employment of Cincinnatus, the employment lauded by Cicero as the most gentlemanly, the most honourable, the most worthy of human arts, would have been held to degrade the insolent hands of those who bore the dishonoured name of Roman citizens. What was the result? There could be but one.

> "A bold peasantry, their country's pride,
> When once destroy'd, can never be supplied."

The quotation is a trite one; so trite, indeed, that we are in

* Sismondi, Hist. Ital. Rep., ch. 1.

some danger of forgetting that it is true. But never was its truth more forcibly illustrated than in the decadence of the Roman empire. "It does not appear," says Sismondi, "that there was any prosperous manufactory in Italy. All manual labour, as well in towns as in the country, was executed by slaves."* For we must remember that what was the case with the agricultural labourer, was also the case with the artisan. All the arts of civilized life which call forth the skill and energy of the modern workman, develop his intelligence, and make him valuable to his country as a citizen and a man, were universally repudiated by the citizens of the Empire, and handed over unconditionally to the slave. The inference, as I told you, is patent enough. Eviscerate a nation of its middle class—the heads that plan, the hardy hands that execute all the material appliances of its civilization; confine the name and privileges of citizen to the idler and the prodigal, too proud to dig, and yet ashamed to beg; too ignorant for intellectual labour, and too sensual for virtue;—do this, and, believe me, you need enter upon no elaborate theories and nice investigations to determine the causes of its decline and fall. That I may conclude with more emphasis and authority than any views of my own could command, allow me to quote the language of an able modern historian upon this point. I am the more anxious to do so, as it refers especially to the last result of the slave system which I can venture to bring before you.

"Tyranny, the tyranny of the princes and the tyranny of the magistrates,—different in kind and far more burthensome,—was not the principal cause of the ruin of the Empire. The real evil which undermined it proceeded neither from the government nor from the administration. Had it been simply of an administrative nature, so many good and great emperors would have found a remedy for it.

* Sismondi, Hist. Ital. Rep., ch. 1.

But it was a social evil, and its source was not to be dried up by less than an entire renovation of the social system. Slavery was this evil. The other ills of the Empire—most of them, at least, as the all-devouring taxation and constant demands of military government—were only, as we shall see, a consequence, a direct or indirect effect." He goes on to trace the substitution of slave for free labour throughout the Empire, and the gradual deterioration of the former, as Greeks, Syrians, and Carthaginians were replaced by Thracians, Germans, and Scythians, who could only imitate rudely the works left by their predecessors. "Objects, the fabrication of which required any industry, soon becoming imitations of imitations, grew ruder and ruder; and as the workmen who could achieve them became fewer and fewer, their price was consequently on the rise. The salaries of those dependent on the state ought to have been raised in the same proportion; and what marvel if the poor soldier, who had to pay fifty sous of our money for the pound of meat, and twenty-two francs for the commonest shoes manufactured, was bent on seeking any alleviation of his wretchedness, and ready to make revolutions in order to attain it. It was worse when Diocletian created another army of civil functionaries. Till his time there existed a military power and a judicial power, which have been too often confounded. He created, or at least completed, the administrative power. This highly necessary institution was, nevertheless, at the beginning an intolerable charge on the already ruined Empire. Ancient society, very different from ours, was not incessantly reproducing riches by industrial means. Always consuming, but, since the destruction of the industrial classes, never producing, the land was consequently required to yield more, while its cultivators daily dwindled in numbers and skill."

Well, then, may Michelet declare that history presents no more terrible picture than that left us by Lactantius of the

murderous struggle between the hungry treasury and worn-out people, who could suffer and die, but could not pay; and well, also, may the Professor of Modern History at Oxford urge, in reply to Mr. Congreve: "Under the able reign of Diocletian the earth swarmed with the consuming hierarchy of extortion, so that it was said that they who received taxes were more in number than those who paid them; and from the general misery infanticide was common."* To this subject, and to the testimony of Lactantius, we shall be compelled to recur when we come to speak of the condition in which the barbarians found the provinces upon their first contact with them. It is not my intention to pursue into particulars the secondary and proximate causes of the fall of the Empire; the moral effect of the edict of Caracalla; the oriental character of Diocletian's administration; his abandonment of Rome; his partition of the government into separate satrapies, with divided interests; the transference of the capital to Byzantium by Constantine; the decay of the military spirit; the diminution and altered organization of the legions; the decadence of the old religion; the enlistment of barbarian recruits; the defenceless position of Rome, compared with that of Constantinople, behind the Balkan and the Bosphorus; the political schism into an Eastern and Western Empire; the number and ferocity of the invaders, who came rolling ever onward from the steppes of Central Asia, like the ceaseless swell of the mighty Atlantic upon the seaboard of Europe; these, and many other things, may have contributed to the great catastrophe; but they can only be deemed developments, or results of the one original cause—the extinction of the national life produced by the dissolution of domestic manners, and the consequent demoralization of society. Rome, as a people, was dead. What boots it to speculate upon the exact accidents which at last detached the sceptre of empire from the

* Oxford Essays, 1856, p. 303.

fingers of a corpse! The signs of her coming fate were inscribed in a language which all might read upon the social aspects of the world. The fingers of a hand came forth and wrote upon the wall: "God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. Thou art weighed in the balances, and found wanting. Thy kingdom is divided, and given to another race."*

NOTE.—I have not thought it necessary to give a separate and distinct reply to the theory of Mr. Congreve, that Roman imperialism was the type of all good government, and a desirable precedent for ourselves. Those who feel any penchant for the notion, I should strongly recommend to read the answer of Professor G. Smith, in the Oxford Essays for 1856, which is as complete and crushing as that gentleman's performances usually are. But in order to convey to the uninitiated some idea of the state of society under Cæsarean rule, and which a Cæsarean rule, so far as mere government is concerned, if it does not produce, has never shown any tendency to prevent, let us give reins to imagination for a moment, and picture to ourselves a few social and political analogies in our own England of the nineteenth century.

An entire revolution has taken place in our principles, manners, and form of government. Parliaments, meetings, and all the ordinary expressions of the national will, are no longer in existence. A free press has shared their fate. There is no accredited organ of public opinion; indeed, there is no public opinion to record. Lords and Commons have been swept away, though a number of the richest old gentlemen in London meet daily at Westminster to receive orders from Buckingham Palace. But at the palace itself has broken out one of those sanguinary conspiracies which have of late become unceasing. The last heir of the house of Brunswick is lying dead with a dagger in his heart, and everything is in frightful confusion. The armed force of the Capital are, of course, "masters of the situation," and the Guards, after a tumultuous meeting at Windsor or Knightsbridge, have sold the throne to Baron Rothschild, for a handsome donation of twenty-five pounds apiece. Lord Clyde, however, we may be sure, is not likely to stand this, and in a few months will be marching upon London at the head of the Indian army. In the mean time the Channel fleet has declared for its own commander, has seized upon Plymouth and Portsmouth, and intends to starve out the metropolis by stopping the imports of "bread-stuffs" at the mouth of the Thames. And this has become quite possible; for half the population of London, under the present state of things, subsist upon free distributions of corn dispensed by the occupant of the throne for the time being. But a more fatal change than even this has come over the population of the capital and of the whole country. The free citizens and prentices of London; the sturdy labourers of Dorsetshire and the eastern counties; the skilful artisans

* Daniel, v. 26, 27, 28.

of Manchester, Sheffield, and Birmingham; the mariners and shipwrights of Liverpool, have been long ago drafted into marching regiments, and have left their bones to bleach beneath Indian suns and Polar snows. Their place has been supplied by countless herds of negro slaves, who till the fields, and crowd the workshops of our towns, to the entire exclusion of free labour; for the free population, or rather the miserable relics of them, disdain all manual employment: they divide their time between starvation and a degrading debauchery, the means for which are sedulously provided by the government. The time-honoured institutions of the bull-bait, the cock-pit, and the ring, are in daily operation, under the most distinguished patronage. Hyde Park has been converted into a gigantic arena, where criminals from Newgate "set to" with the animals from the Zoological Gardens. Every fortnight there is a Derby day, and the whole population pour into the Downs with frantic excitement, leaving the city to the slaves. And then the moral condition of this immense mass! Of the doings of people about the palace we should be sorry to speak. But the lady patronesses of Almack's still more assiduously patronize the prize fights, and one of them has been seen within the ropes, in battle array, by the side of Sayers himself. No tongue may tell the orgies enacted, with the aid of French cooks, Italian singers, and foreign artistes of all sorts, in the gilded salons of Park Lane and Mayfair. Suffice to say, that in them the worst passions of human nature have full swing, unmodified by any thought of human or divine restraints, and only dashed a little now and then by the apprehension that the slaves may rise, and make a clean sweep of the metropolis with fire and steel. But *n'importe — Vive la bagatelle!* Mario has just been appointed prime minister, and has made a chorus-singer from the opera duke of Middlesex and governor-general of India. All wise men and all good men despair of the state, but they are not permitted to say anything, still less to act. Mr. Disraeli lost his head a few days ago; Lords Palmerston and Derby lie in the Tower under sentence of death; Lord Brougham, the archbishop of Canterbury, and Mr. Gladstone, opened their veins and died in a warm bath last week. Foreign relations make a still greater demand upon the reader's imagination. We must conceive of England no longer as

> "A precious stone set in the silver sea,
> Which serves it in the office of a wall,
> Or as a moat defensive of a house;"

but rather as open to the inroad of every foe whom her aggressive and colonizing genius has provoked. The red man of the West, the Caffre, the Sikh, and the Sepoy, Chinese braves, and fierce Orientals of all sorts, are hovering on her frontiers in "numbers numberless," as the flakes of snow in the northern winter. They are not the impotent enemy which we know, but vigorous races, supplied from resourceless founts of population, and animated by an insatiate appetite for the gold and silver, purple and fine linen, rich meats and intoxicating drinks of our effete civilization. And we can no longer oppose them with those victorious legions which have fought and conquered in all regions of the world. The men of Waterloo and Inkermann are no more. We

are compelled to recruit our armies from those very tribes before whose swords we are receding!

Doubtless the ordinary reader will believe this picture to be overcharged, drawn with manifest exaggeration and somewhat questionable taste. *Every single statement which it contains* may be paralleled by the circumstances and events of the decadence of the Roman empire. The analogous situation was with the subjects of this type of all good government, *always a possible,* often an actual, state of things. We think this disposes of the theory of Mr. Congreve. With it may advantageously be contrasted the opinion of a man of more statesmanlike mind. "The benefits of Despotism are short-lived; it poisons the very springs which it lays open: if it display a merit, it is an exceptional one; if a virtue, it is created of circumstances; and when once this better hour has passed away, all the vices of its nature break forth with redoubled violence, and weigh down society in every direction." So writes M. Guizot.* Is it the language of prophecy as well as of personal experience?

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* History of Civilization in France, Lect. ii.

LECTURE III.

THE BARBARIAN RACES.

"Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and unto them were sons born after the flood. . . . . By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations."—*Gen.* x. 1, 5.

SYNOPSIS.—The complexity of the subject.—Its comprehension assisted by the study of Ethnology.—The science rests on three bases: the physiological, the historical, the linguistic.—Its conclusions point (i.) to the Armenian table-land, (ii.) to the plateau of Irân, as the local origins of the human race.—Its division into three classes: the Turanian or Mongol; the Semitic or Aramaic; the Japhetic or Indo-European.—Migrations of the latter, east and west.—Course of the western migrations.—Division of its members into Celts, Slaves, and Teutons.—The physical and moral characteristics of the first; of the second; of the third.—The same of the Mongols.—Early opinions at Rome respecting this barbarian world.—Reasons why its action on the Empire was so long delayed.

WE have already asked the question, What lay outside the Roman empire, its provinces, dependencies, and allied states? The answer is, "The barbarian world." The words, I am sure, convey to many of us an exceedingly indistinct image, or, perhaps it would be more correct to say, a number of images, forming a complex whole, whose limits and characteristic marks are so indefinite that it becomes impossible to combine them into a single, well-composed, and intelligible picture. The Celt, the Teuton, the Goth, and the Hun; the Vandal, the Avar, the Slave, and the Bulgarian; the Frank, the Burgundian, and the Saxon; German

warriors, Scandinavian pirates, and the wild nomad races of central Asia, pass before the mind's eye like the fantastic figures in a magic lantern, which confuse the sight when present, and are undistinguishable in the memory when past. This, however, is a defect inherent in the nature of the subject, or, rather, in our own power of comprehending it; and as such, I fear, can never be completely remedied. No one can hope to surpass Gibbon in lucid arrangement; yet, with most of the students who have attempted to collect and classify their ideas, after perusing the pages of the Decline and Fall, the result is something like that which I have described. Perhaps some training in the science of ethnology would do more than anything else to clear our conceptions, and impress them permanently on the recollection. I do not of course mean that the student of history would be in duty bound to master the whole science of ethnology, even had ethnology reached that stage when it could be taught as a positive branch of human knowledge. But an acquaintance with its elements would, at any rate, give us a few striking landmarks, which might serve to guide our steps amid the perplexing labyrinth of events through which we have to pass.

Chronology and Geography have long been described, with universal consent, as the handmaids of History. Ethnology is her mother, and has, therefore, a still greater claim upon those whose attention the daughter has attracted. Or, to drop all metaphor, the origin of the separate races of the human family has obviously the closest possible connection with the history of those races, whether we regard the simple narrative of their rise and progress as human societies, or whether we examine more closely the moral and political influences which have been found to flow from some peculiarity in the national temperament and character. The agency of *race* in the reciprocal action of peoples upon each other has been immense; and even yet must be re-

garded as very considerable. With the other agencies of law, locality, and religion, it forms one of the great social influences which

> "In quaternion run,
> And mix and nourish all things."

In it we may trace the germ of migration, colonization, and conquest; and from the law of its action in these, the main instruments of civilization, we may, to a certain extent, deduce the law of human progress, and guess at the future destinies of the world. The question of *race* forms one of the largest elements in that important problem of modern politics at which sophists sneer, and which empirical state-doctors despise, but which every real statesman who is acquainted with the past and present of Europe, and who cares for its future, will never venture to neglect—I mean the Balance of power. The ethnological affinities of the various nationalities in Europe not only are intimately connected with the right understanding of its past, but, in some degree, they involve its future; calling forth or checking the ambition of potentates, modifying the policy of governments, and contributing to the political strength or weakness of the great nations of the world. The allegiance of the Slavonic races, hovering between Austria and the empire of the Czar; the Teutonic sympathies which alienate Holstein from Denmark, and attract it to Germany; the common origin of the Romaic peoples, which from time to time seems inclined to ignore the natural ramparts of the Alps and the Pyrenees, and which has expelled the "Tedeschi" from the Lombard plains;—these are all cases in point. "Government has no power," writes Dr. Ansted, "in uniting races whose blood is different. Language may conceal for a time, but cannot obliterate, their permanent character; and for at least thirty centuries there have been as well-marked and important distinctions between the bearded and the beardless man, the red man and the white,

and the true Ethiopian and the negro, as there are at this day; while the essential points of distinction are clear now as they were at that distant period."* The diversity of physical type has not failed to be accompanied by a variety of moral characteristics, themselves also of a very permanent nature. "All the recent events in history," says an able writer in the *North British Review*, "as well as the tendency of opinion in all enlightened men, in all countries, who have been bred up under their influence, point to the conclusion that there is an original and indelible difference in the character of the different races of man; and that each will best find its highest point of social advancement by institutions which have grown out of its ruling dispositions. This is but an exemplification of the profound observation long ago made by Montesquieu, that no nation ever rose to durable greatness, except by institutions in harmony with its spirit." A living writer, who is mainly distinguished for the unhesitating contempt with which he treats opinions, principles, men, and facts, when they cannot be accommodated or tortured into conformity with his own theories, speaks in sneering terms of this as of many other generally accepted convictions.† But as he seems to admit the results, while he questions the causes, further controversy may for the present be dispensed with; and I shall assume the practical value of ethnology, both in history and politics, as a truth which has not been as yet disproved. Let me, then, very briefly direct attention—I can do no more—to some of its best-established conclusions, in so far as they cast a light upon the subject of European history. Only let us remember this, the science is a difficult one because it is as yet in such an unsettled state. A few words at the commencement of a lecture may easily mislead

* Manual of Geographical Science, p. 397.
† Buckle, History of Civilization.

the student, if he does not pursue his inquiries further. Though I have devoted some time and attention to the study, I feel most strongly—perhaps this is the reason why I do feel strongly—that I am in no wise qualified to be its exponent. Still, as something must be done, I will try, for the sake of those to whom the subject is a novel one, to set before you a few of those points which will best repay further examination.

The science of ethnology may be approached in three different ways: more properly speaking, it reposes on three distinct foundations. These may be described as the historical, the physiological, and the philological. In other words, if we want to distinguish between the varieties of the human species, we may interrogate History as to the evidence which she affords of their division into families and nations, with their subsequent changes of locality; or we may seek from physical and anatomical science, the information it can give concerning the differences of bodily form and structure which the nations of the world exhibit; or, lastly, we may discover, from a careful analysis of language, the broad varieties of dialect which imply a variety of origin among the populations where they are spoken. The first method needs no explanation; it differs in no respect from all other rightly conducted investigations into the matter which historical records contain. The second may easily be understood from the familiar illustration of colour. The white European, the black negro, the yellow-tinted Tatar, the red Indian of North America, carry in their very aspect, even to the most unscientific eye, a remarkable evidence of the diversity of blood and race.* You must not, however, imagine that physiological science rests satisfied with this test—a test which by no means universally proves ethnological relationship. It has estab-

* Latham, Man and his Migrations, p. 159.

lished others: the hair; the skin; the bone; the position of the "*foramen ovale*," or aperture through which the spinal cord is connected with the brain; the formation of the pelvis, and the facial angle, or, popularly speaking, the extent to which the forehead falls back from the root of the nose;—all these are taken into account by the ethnologist who proceeds to construct a classification on physiological principles. The third, or philological method, perhaps owes its origin to the comprehensive genius of Leibnitz, which appears to have included almost all the subjects of human knowledge within its grasp. He composed an interesting treatise on the language of the Basques; a matter of violent controversy, which has received within the last few months very valuable elucidation from the splendid work of Prince Lucien Buonaparte. I must not, however, digress into the history of this method, or of its most distinguished professors; I can only shortly state results. Philologers maintain the existence of three main classes, into which nearly all the dialects spoken by men may be divided.

First. Languages without any proper grammatical structure whatever. The roots of such are found to be monosyllabic. They cannot, however, enter into combination with each other, and therefore have no grammatical organization, properly so called. Neither have they particles to remedy this defect. The words are naked signs, and their significance is determined only by their position. The Chinese is generally said to be the most remarkable example.

Secondly. Languages, the roots of which are also monosyllabic, but which are capable of composition, and therefore possess a grammar, and an organization which depends upon the special character of their combination in each particular case. In this class it is said that the leading principle of the formation of words lies in the connection of verbal and pronominal roots; and herein is found the body and soul of the language. To this class belong the Sanscrit and all

its affiliated dialects, as the Greek and Latin; in short, all the languages of the Western world with which you have any acquaintance; our own among the number.

Thirdly. Languages whose roots are verbal only, and consist of two syllables. They require three consonants to be the vehicle of their primary meanings. The grammatical forms are not produced solely, as was the case with the last class, by the composition of verbal and pronominal roots: a simple modification of the root is in itself sufficient. These are the Semitic languages, as they are called; the most familiar example of which is the Hebrew.

We may readily understand how complicated the consideration of these several particulars, historical, physiological, and linguistic, becomes, especially when the facts supplied to us from all these sources have to be sifted, compared, and reconciled. There is, however, this advantage—when all three agree, we seem to have reached a secure standing-place, and are enabled to pronounce, with some degree of certainty, upon a conclusion in which all coincide. If, for instance, we find certain peculiarities of physical structure distinguishing the great body of the inhabitants of the south-west of Asia from the South-European nations; if, in examining their languages, we discover that those spoken by the former fall under the third-mentioned class, with consonantal and dissyllabic roots, while those spoken by the latter, possess monosyllabic roots, capable of combination and grammatical construction, and therefore belong to the second; if, finally, History in her obscure records points to a distinct parentage for these two families of nations, assigning one, for instance, to Shem, the eldest son of Noah, and another to Japhet, his youngest-born; and if, still further, the hints afforded by legend and tradition upon the subject of the migrations of mankind, corroborate what is thus far probable, ethnology may venture to employ the precise and positive language of a science, and distinguish the Semitic from the Japhetic races,

as distinct varieties of the human family. Such, then, is the method which ethnology employs. I must, in the next place, state some of the results at which it has arrived by this method, premising that I would not be understood to speak dogmatically upon points still the subject of controversy, although to enter at present upon such controversy is altogether beyond my purpose, and indeed beyond my power.

All tradition and all historical research concur with Scripture in pointing to the great table-land of Armenia as the local origin of the nations of the world. From the hoary summit of Ararat descended the venerable fathers of the human race. And indeed, even before the Noaic deluge, there is reason to believe that the same region was the cradle of all human beings. Dr. Donaldson, whom no one will suspect of too servile an adherence to the tradition of the Bible, distinctly says, "I am inclined to attach much more importance than some other ethnographers to the geography of Eden as given in the book of Genesis; and I believe that the first seats of the human race are strictly defined by the four rivers there mentioned." Despite the aqueous action of "the waters covering the face of the earth," he is inclined to recognize the four rivers of Paradise in the Tigris, the Euphrates, the Oxus, and the Volga; whereof the two last discharge themselves into the Caspian Sea. It is probable that the area now covered by that vast inland lake was in antediluvian times the seat of a dense population. However these things may be, the great Armenian plateau, so far as we can now conjecture, was the first dwelling-place of the survivors of the flood. The earliest movements of its inhabitants must of necessity have been towards the west and the south-east; that is to say, towards the peninsula of Asia Minor and the Mesopotamian plains. During this period, we have no trace of any variety in language or distinction in race. I agree with those ethnologists who believe that a

population speaking languages of the Turanian type was at first spread over all this space; that is to say, I think them right in holding that this was the earliest stage of all language, and that the different dialects of the Hamitic and Semitic, as well as those of the Japhetic or Indo-European class, were rather posterior developments than contemporaneous varieties of human speech. The tribes speaking what we have called the Turanian languages, are sometimes designated as "Sporadic," sometimes as "Allophylian;" terms intended to designate their entire want of social organization, and the absence of any positive law under which their languages may be connected or arranged. "The characteristic marks of union ascertained for this immense variety of languages are as yet very vague and general." This is the judgment of Professor Max Müller, undoubtedly the best authority in this country; and, resting upon this authority, we may venture to affirm that the various Turanian tongues cannot as yet be considered as evidence sufficient to prove the ethnical relationship of the tribes who speak them. Their character is, however, sufficiently distinct, as a whole, to separate them from that other class of languages which have been called the Semitic, and which seem to have developed themselves out of the other under some particularly favourable conditions, both social and linguistic, which have been long placed beyond the reach of human cognizance. The same remark must be repeated in reference to the third great development of race and language,—the Japhetic or Arian, or Indo-European, the local origin of which may be traced to the country of the Medes and Persians, just as the local origin of the Semitic tongues may be traced to Mesopotamia and the borders of Syria and Arabia. We have, then, the following state of things in the earliest ages of the world, so far as ethnology can recover the picture. First, like the primary strata of geology, a vast number of sporadic tribes, extending from the Ural Mountains to the Indian

peninsula, perhaps we might say covering all Asia, who spoke a language of the rudest and most primitive character, which has been perpetuated down to modern ages in the tongues of the Tatar and Mongol tribes of Asia, and in those of the Laps and Fins of Europe. Next, a more advanced social and linguistic organization, developing itself, ethnologists say, about the 20th century B.C., on the banks of the Euphrates and the Nile. This was the rise of the combined Hamitic and Semitic races and languages; the former being perhaps the earlier and the more imperfect element. On this point, however, no small controversy exists. Great names in philology, such as Bunsen and Max Müller, are in favour of considering Hamitism as nothing more than a special form of Semitism, and altogether unconnected with the Turanian family. Others again, as Colonel Rawlinson, are inclined to regard it as the Turanian in its intermediate stage, when developing into a Semitic form, or, at any rate, decidedly Turanian in character. It will, perhaps, be for ever impossible to determine accurately the relations between the two; we can only say that everything yet ascertained confirms the Scripture statement,* that the descendants of Shem and Ham long continued in connection, and appear to have interchanged localities by conquest and migration. At present we are only concerned with the fact that these second strata of population, the Semitic and Hamitic combined, extended themselves, the first over Assyria, Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, Arabia, part of Asia Minor, and some of the Ægean islands; the second, over Egypt, Ethiopia, and detached portions of the Asiatic continent. These then, are the homes of the Semitic races, or race, sometimes also called Aramaic, from Aram, son of Shem. Except in the case of the Hebrew people, they have not deeply influenced the ultimate destiny of the world. In modern history, as we shall have to deal with it, they play

* Gen. x. 10, *ad finem.*

an insignificant part, save in one signal instance, where they blazed forth with the devouring fire of Islamism, and "the naked locust-eaters of the Arabian desert, the rear-guard of the Semitic race,"* dashed out from their native sands to carry fire and sword, and the banner of the faith, far over Africa, and into the very heart of Europe.

We have next to speak of a family of nations whose destiny has been very different, and whose connection with ourselves is much more intimate and important. In central Asia lies what has been called the plateau of Irân. It is a region lying east of the Euphrates, with the Caspian Sea and the Oxus on the north-east, the Indus and Indian Sea on the east and south, and the Persian Gulf on the south-west. Here, geographers assure us, was a rich and pleasant land, abounding in all those material necessaries, and even luxuries of life, which are calculated to engender and support a teeming population. That it presents a very different aspect at the present time, may be explained by the fact, that it was originally irrigated by artificial means, and that the barbarian conquerors who, generation after generation, have swept across its surface, by destroying the watercourses, have reduced it to sterility. This plateau may be considered to consist of two distinct regions—Upper and Lower Irania. Upper Irania lies to the south, and comprises all those mountain-chains which were the seat of that Persian race whose valour gained for them the dominant power in the second great empire of the world. Lower Irania was the seat of the race whom they supplanted—the Medes. It must not, however, be supposed that the term "Low" necessarily means a low-lying locality; for the table-land of Media often rises to a great elevation, and the fertile valleys which intersect its hills were probably filled with a wealthy civilization, which excited the cupidity and ambition of the founders of the Persian monarchy. Be this as it may, the

* Michelet.

region which we have described, undoubtedly saw the first development of the languages once called Indo-Germanic, because a common basis can be traced for them in the tongues spoken between the Ganges and the Rhine. Further philological inquiry has detected the same element in nationalities not belonging to the German stock. The westerly Celts of Connaught and Brittany, and the inhabitants of all the Romaic countries, have been reduced under the same class, which is now, therefore, styled the Indo-European; and may, perhaps, some day claim even a wider name. The period of the first development of these languages in the Iranian plateau is antecedent to known history. We can only say, that it was, in all probability, gradually matured among a people who were undisturbed by the struggle taking place more towards the west, between the Hamite, Semitic, and Turanian populations. In point of time, therefore, this linguistic type may be considered third in order; and where it has come in contact with the others, is, like a third geological stratum, overlying the other two, except where the disturbing force of local circumstances has caused the primary and secondary to crop up. What seems certain is, that from this race and region were thrown out, eastward and westward, at successive eras, great waves of population, some of whom spread over the Punjaub, or country of the Five Rivers, into the Indian peninsula, while others forced their way to Europe, and formed the basis of all the civilized nations of the West, both in ancient and modern times. The times and manner of these migrations are involved in an obscurity which no historical research has as yet been able to remove. There are, therefore, several hypotheses concerning their order, which, except in a work professedly devoted to ethnology, it would be impossible to discuss. The fact of an eastern migration into the lands beyond the Indus, rests upon the evidence of comparative philology. The primitive language of this district presents

so many, and, to the philologist, such unmistakable traces of an origin common to itself and the languages of Europe, that no one doubts the identity, at some very distant period, of the races whose speech they were. Beyond this, our knowledge does not extend; nor is it necessary for our present purpose to dwell upon the point. We are mainly concerned with the migrations to the West, but here again, unfortunately, we can only speculate and guess. Two narrow passes or "gates," may have enabled the inhabitants of the Iranian plateau to pass onward into the northern and western world—the Pylæ Caspiæ, and the Pylæ Syriæ. By the former, perhaps, a migration swept round the north of the Caspian Sea, and, leaving few traces of itself in Asia, passed into the eastern parts of Europe, and formed the first element of peoples of which few, if any, traces can now be discovered in our European commonwealth. The "Syrian gates," which in later ages gave a passage to Alexander into the heart of Asia, most probably presented a path whereby a second Iranian migration, making their way between the Taurus and the Mediterranean, assailed the Semitic populations in Asia Minor, drove them into its mountain-fastnesses, and, ultimately crossing the Dardanelles, effected a settlement in Southern Europe, as their brethren had done in the North. Several interesting questions meet us here; and there are but few indisputably ascertained facts to aid us in answering them. The great families of the European, or Western Iranian migration, have been clearly determined by ethnologists; as the Celtic, the Slavonian, and the Teutonic. Now, of these, the Celts, Cymry, or Gaels, have been driven onward before the rest into the extreme western corners of the continent. Scotland, Ireland, the Isle of Man, Brittany, and the north-west corner of Spain, alone exhibit anything like unmixed relics of the great Celtic race and language, which must at one time have been spread far and wide over Central and Southern Europe. History, there-

fore, and analogy show that the Celts were the earlier occupants of the territory which they have been compelled to abandon; for a conquering race, like the Saxons in England and the Moors in Spain, are ever found to force the conquered into their remote strongholds and mountain-fastnesses. The Celts were most probably followed by the primitive ancestors of the present Slavonian tribes—Russians, Poles, Servians, Illyrians, Carinthians, Styrians, Hungarians, Slovaks, Bohemians, Tsheks, and Gallicians.* These Slavonians, Sarmatians, or Scythians, are found beside the Celts in all their earliest settlements. They appear, however, to have clung to the flatter and more eastern portions of Europe, and not to have effected any permanent lodgement in the highlands of Germany or the Alps.† The considerations which induce us to believe that this second great wave of Asiatic migration was of Slavonian character, are too complex for enumeration here; for the present we may accept the conclusion, upon good ethnological authority. The third, and final Iranian migration, was, what we have called the Teutonic. There is, with respect to the tribes composing this migration, the singular circumstance that they divide themselves into two classes, speaking what are called the High and Low Iranian dialects respectively; and that the peculiarities of each are undoubtedly reproduced in the High and Low German tongues with which we are ourselves acquainted. The migration was, therefore, probably two-fold in character. First came the Low Iranians, breaking through the Slavonian population which had preceded them from Asia, and finally settling in the north-west of Europe, where they formed the basis of the peoples who speak, or have spoken, Low German tongues; the old Gothic, the Scandinavian dialects, Anglo-Saxon, Frisian, Flemish, and Dutch. They were followed by the High Iranian branch

* Latham, Man and his Migrations, p. 166.
† Donaldson, New Cratylus, § 72.

of the same migration, who probably followed the same course, and, coming in contact with their brethren in Eastern Europe, partially displaced them, or modified the character of their central settlements. But on the south and west, they soon became predominant, peopling the highlands of Germany, and becoming the progenitors of the nations who now speak the High German dialects, and immensely influencing the character of others, when, for instance, as Franks and Burgundians, they crossed the Rhine. One curious fact I will mention with respect to these High and Low German languages, which correspond, as I have said, the first, to the High Iranian, or Persian type of the original stock; the second to the Low Iranian, or Median. Undoubted affinities connect the former with the Greek, while the Latin is evidently akin to the second, or even the Slavonized portion of the second. From this, it follows that the Latin language is the elder of the two, and that their common origin is to be sought at a point much further back in the world's history than was formerly supposed. But on this and many other matters of interest, as I am not lecturing upon ethnology, I cannot enlarge. I will only add, that if, as in respect of the Turanian and Semitic races, we also ask with regard to the great Japhetic, or Indo-European race, with its three families, Celtic, Slave, and Teutonic,—What has been its influence upon the world of modern history? the answer must be—It has peopled that world; it has made that history; it occupies, if we except the waning empire of the Crescent, and the insignificant Turanian subjects of Russia, the whole of Europe; it has retained in Asia nearly all India, Persia, and extensive regions of Asia Minor; it is now extending more or less over Northern Africa, and working its way upwards from the settlements of the Cape of Good Hope, and Tasmania; it has nearly expelled the aboriginal inhabitants of the two mighty American continents; it has

appropriated another great continent in the southern hemisphere; it is spreading day by day throughout the countless islands of the Pacific. The whole course of circumstances into which the destiny of mankind is cast, all the objects of human policy, all the results of what is idly called accident, are working out the prophetic promise spoken to the race of old: "God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant." *

This digression into matters connected with the science of ethnology, however brief and superficial, must, I fear, have appeared somewhat tedious, perhaps inappropriate to our purpose; but if it gives a somewhat more connected and coherent notion of that barbarian world whose relations with Rome form the prelude to modern history, I do not think our time will have been thrown away. It will, at any rate, enable us not only to classify, in some degree, the tribes by contact with which the Empire was harassed or overrun, but also to attach more definite ideas to what such classification implies, and to retain it in the memory. I shall, therefore, in the remainder of this lecture, endeavour to give some idea of the original locality and national character of those barbarian races which we have already described, the Celts, Cymry, or Gael; the Teuton; the Slavonian; and the wild nomads of the Turanian or Mongol stock.

First in order come the Celts, or, as in their relations to Rome we shall prefer to call them, Gaels, or Gauls. We, if we merely speaking of the fall of the Roman empire, it would be unnecessary to treat of a race who, themselves long previously Romanized in institutions, feelings, and manner of life, may be rather said to have shared in that grand catastrophe, than to have caused it. Early in her history, Rome succumbed before the Gaulish foe with whom she disputed the north of Italy. Brennus planted his standard

* Gen. ix. 27.

on the Capitol; his gigantic followers hewed down the venerable fathers of the state on their seats in the senate-house; the barbarians were undoubted lords of the city of the Seven Hills; and long did legend and song recall the terrors of that memorable day. But the Republic, with that indomitable energy which she exhibited under circumstances of peril, more perhaps than any ancient or modern state, shook off the Gaulish yoke; and though the Gaulish name inspired a vague alarm, and, in the days of Marius, brought a real danger to the doors of Italy, the bloody and unsparing wars of Cæsar, in which fell so many thousands of the race, for ever prevented the Celts from menacing the destinies of Rome; or, rather, we should say, amalgamated them with her own fortunes and her fate. With her fate, it is hardly correct to say; for the Gaulish spirit and character has survived the fall of the Empire, and formed perhaps the largest element in the national character of the first people of continental Europe; nay, has doubtless materially modified our own. This, therefore, must plead our excuse for recurring a moment to the portraiture of the Gauls, as it was drawn by those before whose eyes they appeared as a distinct nationality. Their physical aspect was imposing;—gigantic stature, long yellow hair, eyes of a grey or greenish-blue, a complexion so wondrously fair to the sight of the swarthier dwellers in the south, that the very name of Gael, or Gaul, has been derived from γάλα, the Greek word for milk, and immense muscular strength, were their most striking characteristics. These were increased in their effect by the fondness for personal decoration which is so often found in the savage mind. Massive collars of gold, and chains of the same material, hung upon their huge white necks and chests; parti-coloured garments, of the most brilliant dyes, the origin of the Gaelic plaid, concealed their tall bodies and stalwart limbs. "They wear bracelets and armlets, and round their neck thick rings, all

of gold, and costly finger-rings, and even golden corselets," says Diodorus Siculus. The same author speaks of their "dyed tunics, flowered with colours of every kind, and trews, and striped cloaks, fastened with a buckle, and divided into numerous many-coloured squares.* We all remember Virgil's description :—

> "Fair golden tresses grace the comely train,
> And every warrior wears a golden chain ;
> Embroidered vests their snowy limbs enfold,
> And their rich robes are all adorned with gold."

Their appearance in line of battle, naked but for their arms and golden trappings, was admitted by the Roman historians to have been terrible ; and their martial prowess, when well commanded, equalled their appearance, as the legionary, on many occasions, found to his cost ; more especially when opposed to the Gaulish auxiliaries who followed Hannibal across the Alps. The moral characteristics of the race were not less remarkable or distinctive. Vainglorious, talkative, quick in temper and perception, restless and impatient of rule, eager after political change, credulous, fickle, and licentious in their pleasures,—they struck strangers by the loudness of their tones, their boasting, their passionate fondness for news, and their gullibility, their sudden quarrels, disregard of oaths, and desire for revolution and war. Such is the general impression to be derived from the language of Cæsar, Strabo, Diodorus Siculus, and Livy. The first† gives an amusing account of the manner in which they seized upon a stranger entering one of their towns ; stood round him in a circle, and compelled him to recount the news, which generally consisted of "wars and rumours of wars" among neighbouring chiefs and states. These were, of course, skilfully accommodated to the taste of the audience ; and as they instantly proceeded to deliberate upon what they heard, and act upon their deliberation,

* Diod. Sic. lib. v. † Bell. Gall. iv. 5.

Cæsar informs us that, very naturally, they were perpetually getting into hot water. I subjoin the passage from Strabo, with which Michelet commences the history of the great people who so largely share their blood, with his own commentary upon it.

"The Gauls," says Strabo, following the philosopher Posidonius, "are, universally, madly fond of war, hot in temper, and quick to fight; in all other respects simple, and void of malice. Hence, when provoked, they march multitudinously, openly, and incautiously, straight against the enemy, so as to be easily out-generalled; since they may be drawn on to engage where and when one chooses, and for any cause, being ever ready for battle, even though armed only with their own natural strength and audacity. Yet they are easily persuaded to useful employments, and susceptible of culture and literary instruction. Presuming on their gigantic build and numbers, they soon collect in large multitudes, of their own free-will and accord, and at once take side with the injured party." Thus far Strabo. The historian adds: "Such is the first glance cast by philosophy on the most sympathetic and perfectible of the races of man." The genius of these Gauls, or Celts, is at first a mere restless activity, prompting to attack and conquest. It was through war that the nations of antiquity came into contact, and intermingled. A warring and noisy race, they overran the world, sword in hand; led on, it would seem, less by greed, than by a vain and uneasy desire to see, know, and busy themselves with everything, bursting and destroying, through mere inability to create. With their large, fair, soft, and succulent bodies, they are the infants of the nascent world; elastic and impulsive, but neither enduring nor persevering; fierce in their joys; vast in their hopes; and vain; for, as yet, nothing has withstood them.*

Who does not recognize the characteristics of the modern

* Michelet, Histoire de France, i. 1.

Celt, however much they may have been modified by proximity of place, or admixture of blood, with races of the German stock, the Saxon, or the Frank?

The religion of this singular people — Druidism — is perhaps the most interesting of its traditions, — interesting, at least, to us, the busy Anglo-Saxon race, who have covered with forges and manufactories the lonely glens of the Druids' holy isle, where for many generations he reared the massive "cromlech," or cut with a golden sickle the heaven-descended mistletoe from the bough of the sacred oak. Of Druidism, Cæsar* has given us a very full account; and, though disgraced by rites of savage cruelty, it is entitled to a high place among barbarian cults, from its adherence to the great doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and the character for poetic genius and general intellectual culture possessed by the leading members of the order. This, it is true, was counterbalanced by the horrid practice of almost wholesale human sacrifice, wherein large wicker figures were filled with human beings—generally criminals, but innocent persons if criminals could not be obtained,—and subsequently destroyed by fire.

But the instinct of expiation breaks out, more or less, in all barbarous superstitions, under very terrible forms; and few are marked by the redeeming features which may be discovered in the religion of the Gauls. Druidism, moreover, was also a political, as well as a religious institution. Diodorus tells us, "Not only in the concerns of peace, but even of war,—not friends alone, but enemies also, chiefly defer to the Druids and composers of verses. Frequently during hostilities, when armies are approaching each other with swords drawn and lances extended, these men, rushing between them, put an end to their contentions, taming them as they would wild beasts."† We cannot dwell longer upon the history and character of the Gaulish tribes.

* De Bello Gallico, lib. vi. 13. † Hist. lib. v. c. 31.

Let me refer you to one of the best-known, as it is certainly one of the best, works of the modern school of French historians, the "Histoire des Gaulois," by Amédée Thierry, from whom I will only quote a sketch of the personal characteristics of the race, which will be found to agree with what I have collected above from original sources:—"The salient features of the Gaulish family, those which, in my opinion, determine its difference from the other families of the human race, are these: a personal bravery, quite unequalled in the ancient world; a spirit, frank, impetuous, open to all impressions, gifted with pre-eminent intelligence; but, along with all this, an extreme restlessness, no fixity of purpose, a marked repugnance to those ideas of order and discipline so powerful among the Germanic races, much ostentation, and, in short, a great deal of disunion, the result of inordinate vanity. If one was to compare summarily the two races, one might say that the sentiment of personality—the *I*—was developed too much among the Gauls, and not sufficiently in the Germans. So it is that in every page of the history of Gaul we find original characters, who vividly excite our sympathies, and concentrate it upon themselves, inducing us to forget the masses; while, on the other hand, in German history, it is generally the masses who produce all the effect."*

Beyond the Roman and Romano-Celtic world, lay the German and Slavonian tribes. The latter, as we have already pointed out, were probably the first to approach the west of Europe from the Asiatic steppes; but the former undoubtedly broke through and passed beyond them; so that they long anticipated their contact with the Empire, as they also surpassed them in all the higher attributes of social life. The two races, however, were by no means separated from each other by the decisive demarcation which distinguished both of them from Romanized Gaul.

* Am. Thierry, Hist. Gaul. Introduction.

Michelet remarks upon the vague and indeterminate nature of their mutual boundaries. "On our side," he says, "the frontiers of the German language and population run down into Lorraine and Belgium. Eastwards, the Slavonic frontier of Germany has been upon the Elbe, then on the Oder, and then as unsettled as this capricious stream, which so often changes its course. Through Prussia and Silesia, at once German and Slavonic, Germany dips towards Poland and towards Russia; that is to say, towards the boundless world of barbarism."* The description will tolerably well apply to the period of which we speak. The vast region contained between the Baltic and the Danube on the north and south, the Rhine on the west, and the Vistula and Oder to the east, may be described, with tolerable accuracy, as the locale of the Teutonic tribes. They may be divided in Suevic and non-Suevic, answering nearly to the High German, or Southern, and Low German, or Northern, populations. The former occupied the south-eastern, the latter the north-western, division of this large space. The Suevic nations stretched from the Baltic and southern Scandinavia to the Carpathian Mountains; the non-Suevic eventually touched both banks of the Rhine, and reached beyond the Elbe. Of the former, the largest and most important tribe were the Goths. "Intrusive above all the other populations of the earth, the branches of the Gothic tribes have brought themselves into contact and collision with half the families of the world."† Starting from their home in the Scandinavian peninsula, they pressed upon the Slave populations of the Vistula, and, by a rapid course of conquest, established themselves in Southern and Eastern Germany.‡ Here they divided themselves into two distinct

* Histoire de France, ii. § 1.

† Latham, Man and his Migrations, ch. v.

‡ Jornandes, de Rebus Geticis. See, however, Latham's Ethnology of Europe, ch. ix.

nationalities, between which rolled the broad waters of the Borysthenes. To the east, as their name imports, lay the Ostrogoths. The Visigoths, or West Goths, on the opposite bank of the river, extended their outposts to the Danube; and thus came into more immediate and earlier contact with the Roman empire. The second great Suevic tribe, or federation of tribes, were the Alemanni (All-men), who impressed their influence so strongly upon their neighbours that they have given their name to the whole territory beyond the Rhine—"Allemagne." The Romans found them clinging to the banks of the Neckar and the Maine, from which well-wooded regions they perpetually descended upon the imperial provinces so vainly defended by the rampart-wall of Probus. North-east of these, towards the Baltic and the Vistula, were found, when history first notices them, two smaller tribes, which were, however, destined, in after-times, to win by their swords the richest regions of Italy and France, and bequeath to them a name in perpetuity—the Lango-bardi, or Lombards, and the Burgundians. The Suevi proper, from whom the aggregate federation derived their name, formed part of the Alemannic league, and lay immediately to the east of this people. The Vandals originally occupied the ground between the Goths and the Alemanni; but we subsequently find them in the Roman provinces of Pannonia and Illyricum, where Constantine the Great, for the sake of withdrawing them from the Gaulish frontier, had, by a very questionable policy, permitted them to effect a lodgement. These were the Germans who, under Ariovistus, so boldly confronted Cæsar in Gaul, and gave to the Roman armies the first taste of those terrors, which were to be repeated, in more degenerate days, with such disastrous results. Cæsar candidly confesses that his soldiers were panic-struck with the accounts which they received of their new adversaries,—their gigantic stature, marvellous valour and skill in arms, and the terrible flashing

of their eyes in the day of battle, which no foe had ever yet withstood. The whole camp was paralyzed with alarm; the oldest centurions counselled retreat; all who could find a decent pretext slunk away, one after another, from the eagles; the remainder passed the time in unmanly lamentations; many actually shed tears; nearly every man made his will;*—evil omens for the future relations of Rome with those stout warriors of the Teuton woods, who boasted that they would not yield to the immortal Gods themselves; that for years they had never slept beneath a roof; and that they could support the heaven upon their spears.†

We next come to the second, or non-Suevic division of the German race. Here, without doubt, the confederation of the Franks, or Freemen, occupies the first place. We must be careful to remember that the name *did* belong to a confederation, not to a single people, and that this confederation varied in members and influence for perhaps a period of several centuries. Generally they occupied the regions west of those already specified, and were found between the Rhine, the Maine, the Weser, and the Elbe. The Chauci, the Sicambri, the Bructeri, with many others whose names may be found in any good map, but will scarcely linger in the memory, formed that memorable league which has succeeded in impressing its name upon the first country of continental Europe. Dr. Latham has a notion that the name "Frank" denoted any German who repudiated Roman supremacy. This theory, however, seems untenable, if it were only from the fact that "Franks" often formed the best troops of the imperial armies, and occasionally the bodyguard of the emperor. Indeed, they as often declared for Rome as for Germany; and it was portion of the Frankish confederacy which made a brave but ineffectual stand against the irruption of the Suevi, Alani, Vandals, and Burgundians, which Gibbon

* Cæsar, de Bello Gallico, i. 39. † *Ibid.* iv. 7.

has characterized as "the fall of the Roman empire in the countries beyond the Alps."* About the period when the Frankish league begins to play a prominent part in history, we find them divided into two great bodies, whose names will frequently recur. The Salii, or Salian Franks, on the west and south, were more exposed than their brethren to the influence of Roman civilization; and this fact, as we shall hereafter see, materially modified their character. The Ripuarian Franks, on the right bank of the Rhine, long retained stronger traces of the German spirit and German life; and the difference between the two tribes produced results of no small importance in the modern history of Gaul. To the non-Suevic division also belonged the Angles and Saxons, or Anglo-Saxons, as they are sometimes called in combination, and the Jutes, who spread over the Danish peninsula, Sleswig-Holstein, and the Frisian provinces of Holland. The nature of their position determined their character and fortunes—fortunes so important for ourselves and for the world. Debarred by distance and the intervention of powerful tribes from any development in the direction of Gaul and Germany, they turned their energies to the sea, and ravaged in predatory and piratical excursions both shores of the British Channel. Hence, at no distant day, the galleys of Hengist and Horsa, following a well-known route, appeared in the waters of the Thames at the critical moment which Dr. Arnold has termed the true birthday of English history, and beneath the banner of the white horse inaugurated that Anglo-Saxon empire, which has overspread the world. These are, however, matters which belong to a later era. At present, we are concerned with the character and life of the Teuton people at the period when they were preparing unconsciously to overthrow the Empire.

Rome had assimilated the Celt; and, doubtless, from this new blood she derived fresh energy and vigour,

* Gibbon, v. 224.

perhaps some centuries of life. She could not assimilate the Teuton: he was made of sterner stuff. One of the most interesting fragments of antiquity is that in which the Roman's first impressions of Germany have found a voice; it is a cry of mingled astonishment, admiration, and disdain. The pen of Tacitus has recorded the feelings with which a thoughtful Roman of the decadence regarded the men who were to overthrow and yet regenerate the civilization of his age. His little treatise on the manners of the Germans—written as an excursus to his "Histories"—is not conceived in a scientific spirit, for the times knew nothing of the elements of social and political science, or of ethnology; nevertheless it forms the most valuable repertory of facts, to which those who subsequently discussed these subjects have had recourse. It contains many false notions, and perhaps ascribes specially to German savage life some things which are common to all savage life; but it also distinctly points out the great characteristic features of the Teutonic mind, which may be said still to remain among all the nations which have received the German impress upon their social habits and political institutions. The proud spirit of independence, and free personality, the feeling of individualism, so to speak, as distinguished from the social spirit which made it impossible for the Greek or Roman to conceive of himself except as the constituent of a state; the reverence for the dignity of woman, which lies so deep beneath the best institutions of modern times; the spirit of clan, combining with and modifying the spirit of personal independence, and thus rendering colonization and foreign conquest a possibility; the love of battle from the mere instinct of blood, and a certain tendency to intemperance in food and intoxicating drinks, engendered in the damp forests of their native land, but unknown to the dwellers in the light and dry atmosphere of the countries bordering upon the Mediterranean; a genial hospitality, arising in some degree from this vicious tendency,

and so in some degree also humanizing and refining it;—these are the most marked attributes of the Teuton character as it presented itself to the philosophic historian of the Empire, and they reproduce themselves more or less in the habits and history of all the great nations which spring from the Teuton stock. One other attribute must be added to the foregoing. We should very imperfectly estimate the character of the German mind, if we did not take into account a quality which Tacitus was perhaps unable to detect or comprehend. A sentiment of imaginative mysticism, indefinite and vague—and if this language be obscure, it is because we are speaking of what in itself is shadowy and intangible—seems to have entered deeply into the mental constitution of the dwellers in the dim aisles of those gigantic forests which once overspread the whole of central Europe. This is what Michelet calls "the profound impersonality of the German genius,"* which he professes to recognize in the ancient sculptures which represent the race, and in the indecision of look which characterizes their most eminent men. It has ever clung to their descendants, and is the source of what, by a singular accident, has received the misnomer of the *romantic* spirit in poetry and art, as opposed to the more clearly-defined conceptions, and more systematic execution which distinguish the products of intellect and art in the southern or classical nations. What perhaps most struck, by the force of contrast, the Roman mind, was the sanctity of domestic ties, the purity and chastity of manners which distinguished these dwellers in the wild and solitary forest. The tone of Tacitus is that of a man who bitterly feels how much greater, after all, as a moral being, the barbarian may be than the civilized man, when civilization recognizes no higher aim than material splendour and that utility which subserves material wants. Other civilizations than that of the Empire may read a lesson in those brief pages where the

* Histoire de France, liv. ii. § 1, note.

philosopher of a worn-out world records his impression of the races from which that world was hereafter to be reconstituted. A striking result of the superior purity of barbaric life and manners was also visible in the physical aspect of the progeny to which they gave birth. In the lapse of ages, this has been greatly modified, and we seldom now recognize beyond the Rhine those men of flaxen hair, blue eyes, and gigantic stature, overtopping the Italian and the Gaul, who cowed the bold centurions of Cæsar, and left the legions of Varus a prey to the wolves of the Hercynian forest. The German historian Menzel mentions that bones of an enormous size have been found in ancient burial-places, justifying the tradition of heroes who were seven feet high; and that examples of extraordinary stature are still to be met with on the shores of the Baltic, and among the German Alps. "The gigantic shepherd of Sens," he says, "braving the Alpine regions of Berne and Unterwalden, presents the truest image of our forefathers. Cæsar said that the Gauls fled at the sight of the Germans, and the emperor Titus, when commending them, said, 'Their bodies are great, but their souls are greater.'"* From this greatness of soul was born liberty,—liberty in the modern sense of the word; that liberty for which so many martyrs have bled, and are perhaps still to bleed. "Liberty," says Montesquieu, "that lovely thing, was discovered in the wild forests of Germany;" and Lucan had said, sixteen centuries before him, "Liberty is the German's birthright." Our own great historians have not been slow to add their testimony to the fact. "If our part of the world," is the recorded judgment of Hume, "maintains sentiments of liberty, honour, equity, and valour, superior to the rest of mankind, it owes these advantages to the seeds implanted by those generous barbarians;" and Gibbon no less positively declares, "The most civilized nations of modern Europe issued from the woods of Germany; and in

* Menzel, Hist. Ger. i. § 8.

the rude institutions of those barbarians we may still distinguish the original principles of our present laws and manners." The same writer accordingly devotes the ninth chapter of his first volume to the consideration of these institutions. Our plan does not admit of such detail, we can only indicate a few salient points, a few great principles, from which the rest were evolved.

In the Persian language, "Irman" signifies a "brother in arms:" we have already seen that the Teuton was a cognate offshoot of the Iranian stock; in his language, "Germanus" bears a similar import; and, among the features of German life upon which Tacitus has most strongly dwelt, is the "Comitatus," or "brotherhood in arms." This notion of common and equal brotherhood seems to have distinguished from the first the Teutonic from the other Iranian and the Semitic races. With the latter, the feeling of patriarchal reverence for the head of the family or tribe appears to have acquired a predominating influence, which developed into submission to individual supremacy, and found its external expression in those colossal halls and magnificent palaces which the people of the East have ever delighted to rear for the head of the race and state, and of which the excavations at Nimroud exhibit so memorable a specimen. Very distinct from this was the free German spirit, which, starting from the notion of brotherhood rather than that of parental authority, maintained an equality of position and privilege among all the warriors of the tribe, even when the exigences of migration or conquest had united them under the command of a single chief. "Every one enjoyed personal freedom, and had an exclusive right over his own property. In the popular assemblies of each district, the eldest man present presided, and the majority decided. It was only during war that they obeyed a leader, whom they selected by raising him on their shield."* In these assemblies it is

* Menzel, i. § 7.

easy to see the germ of Witenagemotes and Parliaments, the parents of all free institutions. And in the same spirit, doubtless, originated the different orders and societies of knighthood; the guilds and corporations of free citizens so common in the Middle Ages. Menzel is therefore right in saying that the free intercourse between citizens possessed of equal privileges, and bound by the same duties, was the soul of the ancient German communities, and the foundation on which their whole history rests. Gibbon and Tacitus will supply more particulars; it is only needful to say one word in conclusion, upon the somewhat controverted question of the religious instincts and practices of the Teutonic tribes. Perhaps the partiality of their descendants has attributed too high and pure a character to their idea of the Divine Being, and the right mode of approaching him. Tacitus recognized members of the Roman Pantheon in the gods principally worshipped by the Germans, most probably Woden, or Odin, and Thor, from whom are derived the days of the Saxon week; but he bears testimony to a nobler conception of the nature of the Divine Being subsisting among them, than is to be found in the Theogony of Greece and Italy. "They deem it unworthy of the dignity of heavenly beings to inclose their gods within walls, or to fashion their forms under human similitude."* Gibbon indulges in a characteristic sneer at the improbability of a nation unacquainted with the arts of architecture being enabled to think or act otherwise.† But this argues little acquaintance on his part either with the history of religious worships, or the character of the savage mind. We may, at least, ascribe to the Teuton a religious instinct far above the ordinary fetichism of barbarian tribes and the practice of other races of common origin. And we are led to the same conclusion by the feeling with which they regarded their women; a feeling founded, perhaps, on a superstition, but

* Tac. German. § 9. † Decline and Fall, ch. 9.

certainly an ennobling one, the germ of much that is generous and graceful in modern life. Often, says Tacitus, in the day of battle, the flight of armies has been arrested by the earnest entreaties, the bared breasts and dishevelled hair of the women whom defeat would have consigned to slavery. "They believe that something of the divine, some prescient power, dwells within them, and they never neglect either their advice or their prophetic answers."* For the rest, the Germans were not, it is to be feared, free from the common follies, superstitions, and enormities of heathenism. They were devoted to divinations and augury of all sorts: it is more than probable that they were degraded by human sacrifices. Traces may be discovered of an inroad upon the old and more rude Polytheism of ancient Germany by the Odin-worshipping tribes, the Goths, Burgundians, and Lombards, which imparted a more exalted character to the religious instincts of the national mind. "It gave to the Sueves a higher civilization, and bolder and more heroic aspirations. For, although the system of Odin was undoubtedly far from having reached the elevation it subsequently attained, particularly in Iceland, it already contained the elements of a nobler life and deeper morality. It promised the brave immortality, a paradise, a Walhalla, where they would battle the whole day, and at eve sit down to the feast of heroes; whilst on earth it spoke to them of a sacred city of the Asi, Asgard, a happy and hallowed spot, from which the Germanic races had been formerly driven forth, and which was to be the object of their wanderings over the world. It is not improbable that the emigrations of the barbarians were in some degree prompted by this belief, and had in view the discovery of the sacred city, as another holy city was, at a later age, the object of the Crusades."† Mr. Kingsley, in his interesting novel,

* Tac. German. ch. 8.
† Michelet, Histoire de France, book ii. ch. 1.

"Hypatia," has gracefully availed himself of the superstition, and familiarized it in many quarters where it was probably altogether unknown. Such were our German progenitors, who, two thousand years ago, spread themselves over the central regions of Europe, living a wild, free life, which has often been compared to that of the red-men whom the Anglo-Saxon has expelled from their ancestral hunting-fields in the North-American continent. And in fondness for the chase, strange alternations between great physical exertion and torpor, intemperance in food, and disinclination to agricultural and other labour, the parallel is sufficiently exact. But the German life exhibited some peculiarities, distinguishing it on the one hand from that of mere hunters or nomads, and on the other from the settled habits of civilized men. "It is well known," Tacitus tells us, "that the Germans are not dwellers in cities: they do not even allow contiguous abodes;" a feeling which has long distinguished the Anglo-Saxon from the descendants of the southern races. "They live scattered and apart, as some fountain, field, or spring has attracted their fancy. Their villages are not constructed like ours, with houses combined into continuous rows; each man surrounds his residence with a space of unoccupied ground,"—the origin of the famous Salic land,—"either owing to ignorance of the art of architecture, or as a protection against fire."* To the women they generally left the labours of the field; they loved the bath, and were addicted to beer; dined together upon occasions where the interests of war or peace demanded consultation; were of all nations the most profuse in hospitality, the most madly enslaved by the passion of gambling; were indulgent to their slaves; did not vindictively pursue the homicide to death; granted favours with freedom, but neither imputed them to others as obligations, nor regarded them as such themselves. Who cannot re-

* Tac. Germania, c. 16.

cognize traits of character which neither lapse of time nor change of locality has obliterated, or perhaps will ever obliterate?

After all, however, we should have but an imperfect picture of the Teuton, if we failed to see him in the day of battle; nor could any account of that which is the main object of our work—his collision with the Empire—be considered complete, without a brief sketch of one among those terrible conflicts which, for centuries, this collision almost every month called forth. Stout old Ammianus is telling us, with all the spirit of an eye-witness and a combatant, how he fought the Alemanni under his beloved commander Julian:—"At the brazen blast of the trumpet, both sides, in great strength, moved forward to the combat. Flights of missiles were discharged to herald their approach: the Germans coming on with more speed than caution, with swords drawn, and yelling frightfully, enveloped our cavalry: more than ordinarily furious, they shook their horrid hair, rage flashed from their eyes; while our resolute fellows, protecting their necks and breasts with their bucklers, and giving point with their swords, or brandishing their death-dealing weapons, menaced the advancing foe. The combat thickened; the cavalry steadily closed their ranks; the infantry strengthened their flank, and protected their front with a thick serried row of shields; dense clouds of dust whirled upwards in the air; charges were made on all sides, as, in the ebb and flow of battle, our men pushed forward or gave way. Some of the enemy's most skilful warriors, by pushing with their knees, endeavoured to force back the opposing line; but, by their excessive efforts, became so involved with their enemies, that hand was locked with hand, and shield with shield. Heaven rang with the shouts of those who conquered and those who fell. Our cavalry are thrown into disorder; they retire for support upon the foot; their leader is slain; the Cuirassiers (Cata-

phracti) leap from their horses, and make confusion worse confounded; but the steadiness of the legionaries, the personal coolness, gallantry, and exhortations of the emperor, restore the fight. The Alemanni, upon the repulse of the cavalry, imagining the day to be their own, charge vehemently against our front line. But the Romans stand fast; the combat is equally maintained on both sides; the Cornuti and Braccati, men of a hundred fights, attempt to daunt their enemy with frightful gestures, screams, and yells;* the tumult, commencing in a whisper, as the fury of the combatants gathers strength, swells into a mighty roar, like that of breakers lashing an iron-bound coast; the air, hissing over-head with the rush of missiles, is darkened with dust; it is impossible to see a yard in advance; weapons and men's bodies are thrust upon each other in hopeless confusion. And now the fury and violence of the barbarians blazed forth like a conflagration, and strove to force an entrance into the densely-serried square of shields (*testudo*), at which they hewed in all directions with desperate strokes. In the mean time, the volleys of missiles never ceased; the iron-tipped arrows flew in clouds, though sword-blades were hacking one another in close encounter; breastplates were being cloven asunder; and the wounded who had not quite lost all their blood, struggling up to strike again. Both parties had met their match: the Alemanni were superior in strength and stature, the legionaries in discipline, experience, and skill; the former savage and tumultuous, the latter cautious and calm; the one trusting to their enormous physical force, the other to their courage. Over and over again the Roman, forced back by the mere weight of the shock, recovered his ground; while the barbarian, as his limbs failed him, supported himself on his left knee, and in this position provoked the blow of his adversary,—an indi-

* The word in the original is "*barritus*," which denotes the noise made by an elephant.

cation of unyielding obstinacy carried to its highest pitch. A band of chosen warriors forming themselves into a circle, among whom their kings were distinguishable, and dashing forward, broke through our front, and, followed by the multitude, reached our reserved line, which, composed of men in closer array, stood like a tower against the foe, and renewed the combat with fresh spirit: waiting their opportunity, they followed up the enemy, as the Mirmillo chases the Retiarius; and as in his blind fury he exposed his sides, they pierced them with their swords. The barbarians, recklessly throwing away their lives for a chance of victory, strove hard to break our compact formation. We mowed them down by whole ranks at a time; but fresh combatants took their place; the ceaseless groaning of the dying at last shook their courage. Thoroughly broken in spirit by their losses, and reserving all their remaining energy for flight, they quitted the field in all directions at the top of their speed. As the passengers and crew from a wreck are driven hither and thither by the storm through the boiling eddies of the deep, so disappeared the barbarian host,—a result which no man who was there that day will deny, was to be wished rather than to be expected."* I have been compelled to compress the account of this interesting and somewhat difficult author, yet I have endeavoured faithfully to render every expression of importance. Even from this rude attempt, the reader may picture to himself how our fathers fought for the empire of the world, and estimate the justice of M. Guizot's criticism, when he declares that Ammianus is a rude old soldier, destitute alike of imagination and of taste.

But we must turn to another race,—the Slavonian.†

* Ammianus Marcellinus, xvi. 36—51.

† I have preferred this spelling to "Sclavonian,"—an attempt to give the peculiar aspirate of the tongue. But as this seems to be gradually disappearing from the more refined dialects, it is perhaps best to omit it.

This also has its special interest, for there are not wanting political prophets who declare that in its turn the Slavonian race will exercise a predominant influence upon Europe and the world, and whose confidence in the ascending star of the Muscovite has not been shaken by the repulses which Russia has of late received in her progress to universal empire. "A great deal is said about the future prospects of this stock," writes Dr. Latham, "the doctrine of certain able historians being, that as they are the youngest of nations,—a term somewhat difficult to define,—and have played but a small part in the world's history hitherto, they have a grand career before them, a prospect more glorious than that of the Romano-Celtic French, or the Germanic English of the Old and New World. I doubt the inference, and I doubt the fact on which it rests."* There is but little in the character of the race itself which fits it for achieving so high a destiny; but the conception is not new to the ambitious spirit of its leaders. The Russian nation is in its origin half Asiatic, half Slave. "The nucleus of this grand empire," says Thierry, "destined to experience so many revolutions of fortune, was attempted to be formed in the sixth century, on the borders of Asia and Europe, by the alliance of two barbarian races conspiring against the Roman empire. Its first object was the pillage of the valley of the Danube, its first war-cry, 'To the City of the Cæsars!' Has it materially changed since then?"† Significant words, to which we shall have occasion to recur. The Slavonian tribes, then, or Sarmato-Slavonians,—for Sarmatian seems to have the best title to be considered the generic name, though, chronologically speaking, of earlier advent in Europe than the Teutons, appear to have suffered displacement by the latter in more than one instance, and generally to have succumbed to the superior warlike energy of their neigh-

* Man and his Migrations, ch. v.
† Attila et ses Successeurs, vol. i. p. 397.

bours, of whatever stock. Their principal representatives in modern Europe are the Russians, with the various Polish nationalities, the Servians, the Hungarian Slovaks, the Slaves of the Austrian empire, such as the Illyrians, Styrians, Carinthians, and the Tcheks of Bohemia. A large infusion of Slavonic blood has also taken place among the modern Greeks, a fact which accounts for the Russian sympathies of this spurious Hellenic race. A controversy has been maintained respecting the origin of the name. The fact that, like Lydian, Phrygian, or Cappadocian in ancient times, it has become among ourselves the synonyme of servitude, does not of course determine its real meaning. Those who bear it, naturally dignify its import and themselves by assigning to it the signification of "glory;"—the Slavonians to themselves are, therefore, "the glorious race." But the truth seems to be, that "Slava," in its primitive meaning, was nothing but "speech," and that the secondary notions of "fama," "gloria," followed from this, as it does in other tongues.* Now, every nation are to themselves and their own notions, the speakers of intelligible language; while strangers are Βάρβαροι, "barbarians," speakers of unknown tongues. Slave or Slavonian was, therefore, nothing more than the gentile appellative, derived from the use of the national tongue, and intended as antithetical to "foreigner." In the ancient historic world, the Slaves played an insignificant part. Some have identified them with the Scythians of Herodotus, who, when they came into more immediate contact with the Greeks, received the name of Ἐνετοι, which the Latins transformed into Veneti, and the Germans into Wenden, or Vanar. They called themselves Serbi, or Servi, a name retained by their modern descendants the Servians. Like the Celts, they seemed destined to be driven into corners in the old world. We hear in Cæsar† of Veneti on the Atlantic sea-board, where, doubtless, they were min-

* 1 Cor. xiv. 11. † De Bell. Gall. ii. 34; iii. 8.

gled with Celtic tribes; and other Veneti have acquired historic glory for the name, by settling beside the northern angle of the Adriatic, in a district where afterwards arose the beautiful and glorious city of Venice. We are, however, more concerned to determine their locality in the fourth century after Christ, when, in combination with members of the Mongol or Turanian stock, they broke in upon the Roman frontier. A vast triangular space between the Baltic and the Black Sea, having its apex at the Carpathian Mountains, and for its base a very indefinite line, bisecting European Russia from N.W. to S.E., may serve to indicate in general terms the situation of the Slavonian tribes at this era. But being hard pressed by the Teutonic populations on one side, and the wild nomads of Asia, the Bulgarians, Avars, and Huns, upon the other, they do not seem to have succeeded in establishing free nationalities of their own, but were more or less in subjection to their neighbours. After the death of Attila, being released from subservience to the Huns by the disruption of their empire, and neglected by the Germans, who were pouring hotly over the Balkan and Alps, they acquired a degree of independence which they never previously enjoyed, and we hear of their forming alliance with a portion of the Huns, and with the Bulgarians, against the Greek empire.* Of the Slaves themselves, we hear of three principal branches, or aggregates of tribes. The most eastern were the Antes, who stretched over the Euxine, and extended into the country between the Dnieper and the Don. These are, most probably, the progenitors of the great Russian people. The western group were Veneti, Venedi, or Wends, who rested upon the Baltic, and reached to the Carpathians. It is with this particular portion of the Slavonian family that the Greeks and Romans, as we have said, were acquainted. Between them were the Slovenes or Sclavenes, who appear to have possessed less organization

* See the next Lecture.

and gentile coherence (if we may use the expression) than the other two, and are found mingled sometimes with the eastern and sometimes with the western branch, in their migrations and enterprises. The future fortunes of the Slavic race will be briefly touched upon in another lecture. Their personal and social characteristics are distinguishable from those of the Teuton and the nomad Mongol of the Asiatic steppes, who severally bowed their neck beneath the yoke. Long servitude is not favourable to the development of the nobler qualities of our nature, and the Slave, less fiery than the German, and less ferocious than the Avar, the Bulgarian, or the Hun, exhibited in the hour of triumph a subtle cruelty which has identified with his name some of the most terrible tortures ever inflicted upon humanity. An unclean race, dwelling in miserable hovels of mud and reeds, which were scattered at rare intervals among impervious forests and morasses, they lived a life of promiscuous intercourse, and were either entirely naked within doors, or clad themselves in the skins of beasts, or a suit of dark tissue woven by the women, from which the nation derived a particular name. They are said to have smeared their bodies with soot, and to have eaten the flesh of all sorts of animals, even the most noisome and disgusting. As they loved enjoyment, they possessed some of the virtues of hospitality, and in exhibiting these to the stranger, they were distinguished for the veracity and good faith which marks the actions of the Bedouin of the desert under similar circumstances. But a very different picture is drawn of the Slave when engaged in war. There, duplicity, cunning, and cruelty were his characteristic attributes. Armed with a long lance, a bow, and a quiver of poisoned arrows, the Slavonian warrior stole warily upon his enemy, and never missed his mark. He is described as being skilled in all the stratagems with which the Mohican or the Iroquois wars upon hostile tribes, creeping for miles upon his belly under

brushwood, crouching for whole days in ambush behind a rock, or concealing his entire body for hours beneath the water, while he breathed through a hollow reed. His moral and religious instincts were of the lowest kind. Of marriage he scarce had any notion; his worship was a fetichism of the ordinary sort practised among savages, mingled with sorcery. Some writers speak of a singular dualistic religious theory subsisting among certain tribes, which, in its Manichæan character, strongly recalls the East, and is no slight indication of their Iranian origin. They believed in the existence of a Good and Evil Being, but paid adoration to the last alone, having, as they supposed, nothing to apprehend from the beneficence of the first, or White Divinity. Their Black God, or Zernaboch, as likely to do them more harm, they regarded with abject terror, and appeased with horrible rites.

Such is the picture of the Slaves, as drawn by their terrified enemies, the later historians of the Empire,* and therefore, in all probability, exaggerated. But it contains much which may be recognized in less offensive form among the modern representatives of the race. These, like their ancestors, are, generally speaking, sallow-skinned, with long, lank, dark hair, and small deep-set eyes, of finely-formed frames, though not exhibiting the stalwart chest and shoulder which marks the Teuton and the Celt. The cunning in all species of deception, ambuscade, and stratagem, of which Procopius speaks, is still discernible in the national character, and has also its more favourable development in productive skill, and a very remarkable faculty of imitation. Their courage is more passive than active in its character, and the Slavonian blood is deficient in that fiery ardour, the *élan* which precipitates the Frank and his kindred races upon the foe. The wild but plaintive spirit of the hereditary bondman yet lives in his national

* Procopius, &c.

music, as it breaks upon the ear, in the low, melancholy wail of the wind-instruments from the bands of Croat and Slavonian regiments on the Glacis of Vienna. Whether these are the attributes of a conquering and dominant race, time alone can prove, and we will not anticipate by conjectures the disclosure. Yet it is hard for us, who come from a stock distinguished by a more expansive genius, a more indomitable blood, to believe—whatever be the faith inculcated at St. Petersburg—that the Slavonian shall ultimately rule the world.

But beyond the Teuton, beyond the Slave, beyond the limits almost of what was deemed the habitable world, lay another world of barbarism, more wild and terrible still. The steppes of northern and central Asia have from immemorial time projected on the West vast hordes of hardy horsemen, attracted by the charms of a softer climate and more fertile land. They belonged to the great Turanian or Mongol family of nations, terms not exactly identical; for Dr. Latham has observed, that, as a linguistic appellative, the former has a larger range; whereas in anthropology, the second is the wider class. It is needless to repeat the questions connected with their ethnology, of which we have already treated. The fourteenth chapter of Gibbon will give you a classification of their tribes, and an interesting account of their movements, so far as they are connected with European history. In modern days they are best known as Tartars or Tatars. The former designation they derived from the pious aspiration of St. Louis, that the armies of Christendom might be successful in consigning to their native Tartarus the hordes of Tchenghis-khan. Four great divisions of this family have played a conspicuous, if not a lasting part upon the theatre of the world,—conspicuous for devastation and for blood. The Mongols proper, the Fins, the Turks, and the Ugrians have arisen from time to time, as a marvel or a terror to the Western world. Of one of these

formidable races, and their still more formidable leader, we shall soon have occasion to speak at length. Attila, king of the Huns, has won for himself a name in history which stands beside that of Cæsar and Napoleon, though unilluminated by the light of posthumous glory which gilds the memory of those children of victory. To the ecclesiastical writers of succeding times, he appeared, as Thierry has called him, an emissary of Providence, a Messiah of misery, suffering, and ruin, sent to chastise the crimes of Rome. In their imaginations, excited by mysticism and suffering, his personality was merged in his mission, and they affixed to him the name of the "Scourge of God," by which he has ever since been known to the Christian world. Like a destroying angel, he came and went from the great wall of China to the Atlantic Ocean; and where that terrible deluge of horsemen had once passed, nothing was left but a confused *débris* of the civilization it had overwhelmed; no roof-tree remained standing; no grass was ever seen to grow; the land was as a howling wilderness, ungladdened by the sight of

"Flocks, or herds, or human face divine."

The hearts of men between the Volga and the Pyrenees quailed for generations after his death, at the thought of Attila the Destroyer, and three separate streams of tradition have brought down to modern Europe the terrors of that memorable name.

The Huns will serve for us as an ethnological type of all those tribes of Turanian stock — Avars, Bulgarians, Turks — who appeared, each with more appalling aspect than the other, from behind the Ural Mountains and the Caspian Sea, on the frontiers of the falling empire. Long ages before, their redoubtable character, and the miseries which attended on their steps, had been sketched by the inspired eloquence of the prophet Joel. "A great people and a strong: there hath not been ever the like,

neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations. A fire devoureth, before them, and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them. The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run. Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array. Before their face the people shall be much pained; all faces shall gather blackness. They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks: neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path: and when they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded. They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run upon the wall; they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief. The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining."* It is curious to compare with this singular passage the language of contemporaries. A Romanized Gaul, or Gallo-Roman, one Caius Sollius, had been elected bishop of Clermont, in Auvergne, in the fifth century, when the alarm caused by the Hunnic invasion was at its height. In accordance with the literary fashion of the times, he received the name of Sidonius Apollinaris, and it is under this appellation that Montesquieu, Gibbon, and Guizot all alike refer to his descriptive notices of the age in which he lived, as equally graphic and trustworthy. His character was a strange mixture of heathen scholar and Christian priest, his abilities above the common average, his taste and style of composition thoroughly artificial, and full of false glitter and affectation. Still it cannot

* Joel, ii. 2—10.

be denied that he was mixed up with some of the most important political transactions of his time; that he possessed a keen power of observation, and no little skill in picturesque description. Both Goth and Hun passed before his eyes, and he has daguerreotyped them both. I should despair of conveying in an English version, the peculiar character of the Latin hexameters, written about the year 468 A.D., in which he paints the ferocious followers of Attila; but the main features agree with the accounts of more prosaic historians. "They are a nation," he says, "fierce in soul and frame. Even from the face of the infant, newly-born, looks forth the native horror of the race. Their thick bullet skulls rise into a peak at the top; their eyes are invisible in twin caverns beneath their brows, yet their sight is keen and reaches far. The mother flattens, with bandages, the infant's nose, lest hereafter it should be in the helmet's way,* and so the affection of the mother deforms the child she has borne for war alone."†

Ammianus Marcellinus, a stout old soldier who met them in the field, is equally exact, and not more complimentary. His account was written about one hundred years previously, A.D. 375, and conveys the first impressions made by this wild race upon the men of Western civilization. "The Huns," he says, "surpass in barbarism and ferocity all that we can conceive of barbarous and ferocious. From earliest infancy they seam their faces with long gashes made by some iron instrument, to prevent the growth of hair, so that they grow up to old age beardless and of most uncomely aspect. Their body is short and thick-set, their neck and shoulders

* A sufficiently absurd reason. It was probably done to keep up the physical characteristics of the dominant part of the race, and so became a badge of aristocratic birth. So Thierry: "Il est plus sensé de croire que les Mongols, étant devenus les dominateurs des Huns, leur physionomie eut tout le prix qui s'attache aux distinctions aristocratiques: on tint à honneur de se déformer pour sembler de la race des maîtres."—*Histoire d'Attila*, vol. i. p. 9, note.

† Sidon. Apoll. Pan. Anthem. v. 245.

immense, their limbs firmly knit together, and their whole appearance such, that you would imagine them brute creatures on two legs, or the rudely-fashioned images hewn out of logs of wood, which are sometimes placed on the parapet of a bridge. They do not live like men, but like animals, and make no use either of fire or any sort of cookery for their food. It consists either of the roots of wild plants, or more than half-raw meat, which they warm in riding, between their thighs and their horses' backs. Of wheeled carriages they make no use, and have not even huts for dwelling-places; for they would never consider themselves in security beneath a roof. Ever traversing the mountain or the forest, they are inured from earliest infancy to all possible hardships,—hunger, thirst, and cold. In their migrations they are followed by their flocks and herds: the women and children are inclosed in covered carts. Were you to ask these wild beings where they came from, or where they were born, they could not tell you; they do not know. Their dress consists of a coarse linen tunic, and a sort of helmet made of the skins of wild rats patched together. The tunic is dark-coloured, and rots upon their persons; for while it lasts, it is never changed. A sort of hood, or casque, which they carry on their necks; buckskins rolled round their hairy legs, complete their equipment. Their shoes, shapeless and of huge size, are so inconvenient that they cannot walk in them, and, consequently, are quite incapable of fighting on foot;" a fact which gives to Jerome ground for one of his bitterest reproaches to the degenerate Roman legionary who quails before such a foe. "To see them, you would think they were glued to their little horses, which are extremely ugly, but unwearied, and swift as lightning. It is on horseback that their whole lives are spent. Sometimes they sit astride; sometimes like women. On horseback they hold their assemblies; there they buy and sell, eat and drink, or sleep

and dream,* reclining on the necks of their steeds. In battle they rush on without plan or order, under the leading of their different chiefs, and pour upon the enemy with frightful cries. If they meet a resolute resistance, they disperse for the moment, but return to the charge with the same rapidity, overturning and sweeping before them everything in their path. They have no idea of escalading a fortified place, or carrying an intrenched camp by storm. Nothing, however, can equal the skill with which they discharge, at a prodigious distance, their arrows, tipped with pointed bone, as hard and deadly as steel. They fight at close quarters, with a sword in one hand and a net in the other, with which they envelop their enemy while he is engaged in parrying their blows. The Huns are fickle, faithless, changeable as the wind; a prey to the furious impulse of the moment: they know no more than brute beasts the distinction between right and wrong. Their language is obscure, tortuous in construction, and full of metaphor. As for religion, or religious instinct (*religio vel superstitionis reverentia*), they have none; nor do they practise any form of worship. Gold is the object of their passionate adoration."† I have preferred to translate the detailed account of a contemporary, a man of sense and observation, who had seen and fought with this famous race, rather than any of the perhaps more highly-painted pictures which may be found in writers of later date. We must not, however, omit the earliest notice which occurs of the European branch of the family. Tacitus, it seems, had heard of the Fins; and he tells us, undoubtedly from hearsay, "They are a marvellously savage race, and have neither arms, horses, nor household gods: their food is herbage; their clothing skins; their sleeping-place the bare ground: their only hope of sustenance rests in their

* "In altum soporem ad usque varietatem effunditur somniorum."
† Amm. Marcell. xxxi. 2.

arrows, which, from want of iron, they point with bones."* With respect to the question of their religion, or rather the absence among them of all religion, Thierry is right in remarking that this did not prevent their devotion to sorcery and magic in its grossest forms. They practised certain peculiar modes of divination, which were found by European travellers of the fifteenth century still in vogue at the court of the successors of Tchenghis-khan. The course of conquest and contact with a higher civilization than their own, taught the rude nomads some of the arts, and inspired them with some of the tastes of more settled life. Their encampments on the emerald meadows which skirt the Danube assumed the appearance of regular villages, gay with fluttering streamers, and the painted roofs and walls of their wood-built huts. The royal residence did not disdain the accessories of art. Priscus, a Greek historian, who accompanied Maximin, the ambassador despatched to the court of Attila by the Greek emperor Theodosius, has left, in an interesting book, which will well repay perusal, an intelligent account of all he heard and saw at the Hunnic capital in central Hungary. His description of the stone baths erected for Attila by Onagesius, a Greek architect, and of the elaborate architecture of the wooden palaces of Attila and his queens, has been somewhat pompously given by Gibbon; but even the greater simplicity of the original

* Tac. Germania, c. 46. It is scarcely worth while to translate the very similar description of Claudian; but, for the sake of the curious, we append it:—

> "Est genus extremos Scythiæ vergentis in ortus
> Trans gelidum Tanain, quo non famosius ullum
> Arctos alit: turpes habitus, obscœnaque visu
> Corpora; mens duro nunquam cessura labori;
> Præda cibus, vitanda Ceres, frontemque secari
> Ludus, et occcisos pulchrum jurare parentes,
> Nec plus nubigenas duplex natura biformes
> Cognatis aptavit equis: acerrima nullo
> Ordine mobilitas, insperatique recursus."
>
> CLAUDIAN, *in Rufinum*, i. 323.

is sufficient to show that the artists who constructed these buildings—very much in the same manner, it would seem, as the Swiss now carve their wooden toy-houses—had advanced far beyond the tastes or the wants of the rude "sleepers on horseback," as they first emerged from their Asiatic deserts. In commerce they were as little advanced as in the other arts of life; yet one branch of them appears to have originated the trade in furs, which they procured in the Siberian forests.*

Such were the barbarians who, beyond the Teutons of Tacitus, beyond the Slavonic tribes who lay outside of them, nay, far beyond "the limits of the world," were for many ages connected, in the Roman mind, with nothing more than grotesque or superstitious associations. The tales of happy Hyperboreans; Oxiones, with the heads of human beings strangely wedded to brute forms; Agathyrsians, with blue streaming hair; and savage dwellers in gloomy twilight, where the sun never rises upon the Rhipæan mountains, may have amused the gossips of the Forum, or sometimes, in more philosophic circles, have given rise to speculation concerning these strange beings and remote realms; but it was long before they caused real political alarm. In the Augustan age, under the complete administrative system of Tiberius,—even in those perilous days when the conflicts between Otho, Galba, and Vitellius disclosed, perhaps for the first time, the inherent weakness of imperial rule,—the dark thundercloud of barbarian war which hung upon the horizon of the Empire was as yet "no bigger than a man's hand." The eagles were still, in the proud language of the Roman historians, "the gods of the battles." The legionaries, though recruited in Britain, Gaul, or Spain, still upheld the glorious traditions of the Republic among the hills of Wales, in Armenia, in Palestine, on the Rhine. The splendid ritual of Paganism still

* Jornand. R. G. 24.

dazzled the eyes of the multitude, although its inner life was gone ;—

> "The oracles were dumb ;
> No voice nor hideous hum
> Ran through the archèd roof in tones deceiving ;"

but the snowy steer still fattened in the pastures of Clitumnus, to fall at the altar of Capitolian Jove ; still, with the silent virgin the pontiff scaled the Capitol, unconscious how soon he was to surrender his time-honoured name to the minister of a more ambitious system, and more widely dominant faith ;—still the long triumph wound its glittering coils far up the Sacred Way, and showed to the vainglorious rabble of the Circus and Suburra, the spoils of barbaric nations, and the persons of captive kings ;—still Janus sent forth his degenerate sons to war, and at the return of peace the temple-gates were solemnly closed, and Mars Gradivus crowned beside the shrine ; and still, though the days of the Empire were numbered, and the spoiler at her gates, Terminus stood fast where Rome's first fathers, with reverent hands, and minds prophetic of her mighty destinies, had fixed his place. At the very hour when destruction was impending, how could these things be? When her limbs were almost collapsing, and the dews of death were already on her brow, how could the Queen of the nations preserve her ancient and imperial mien?

It is not difficult to discern some of the causes which, for a time, maintained the cohesion of the Empire, and prevented its disintegration, by the forces which had begun to act upon it from within and from without. "Several causes preserved the Empire in unity and strength, in spite of the obvious defects of its organization. The Huns and the Scythians were still hidden in their wastes ; and, with the single exception of Judæa, the foreign nations which composed the Roman dominions were either decrepit or immature. The exhausted provinces of the Seleucidæ ; the

decayed kingdom of the Ptolemies; the worn-out commonwealths of Greece; the effete barbarism of Gaul and Spain; and the rude chaos of Celtic Britain, had no elements of national strength to oppose to the united and vigorous race which, from the Alps to the end of Colchia, formed the sovereign people of Rome. And, as the Empire was now established thoroughly in these countries by means of colonies or of military garrisons, there was no alternative in the general weakness but that of submission to its domination. But, though fear was as yet the main bond of the Roman empire, the provinces, if politically subject, had few reasons to regret their fate. They had, most of them, escaped a much worse servitude: their governors, however despotic they were, usually respected their religion and general institutions; they retained their social rights and domestic laws; and, occasionally, some of their higher citizens were raised to eminent places in the Roman state. And, although they were feeble as separate nationalities, they yielded all the elements of power to bold and energetic masters; and the youth of Gaul, of Spain, and of Asia Minor, when broken in to the Roman discipline, formed immense and perfectly organized armies entirely free from patriotic ideas, with no hope but that of rising in the service, and with no country but that within sight of their eagles. Hence, the Empire was very often at peace; and in war was able to crush its foes, although it pressed on a mass of subject nations as yet deprived of political freedom.

"Again, the double administration of the Senate and the Cæsars was not so destructive as might be imagined, although we think it was injurious to the Empire. As head of all the armies of Rome, the emperor wielded the power of the sword throughout a feeble and demoralized world; and, though forced to delegate it to his lieutenants, he remained their military chief and superior, and inspired them with a fear and respect peculiarly strong in the Roman breast.

Even in the provinces of the Senate he was the real arbiter of affairs; he ruled, if he did not appoint, the proconsuls; and, virtually, he was the source of law and authority. Throughout his own provinces he was quite supreme; in them no check upon him could exist, and his legates and procurators were wholly his instruments. As regards Italy, he commanded the prætorians in person, and thus he was her military despot; at Rome, either by himself or his agents, he was consul, censor, and tribune of the people; and thus he centralized the executive government in himself. He had an undefinable control over the Senate; he was the legal champion of the Plebs; he had by law much legislative and judicial authority; and he could always throw the sword into the balance. Against this vast and unlimited power, the Senate had nothing to oppose but its ancient majesty and legal rights; and thus, though it was called an imperial estate of the realm that made a partition of the sovereignty, it was in fact altogether subordinate. Hence, the real constitution of the Empire at this period was a military monarchy, veiled under the form of a partnership: there were but few efficient checks on despotism, and the double administration of the Senate and the Cæsars was a delusion. Accordingly, the Empire to a great extent was preserved from the anarchy of two independent governments; though it seems to us that the name of the double administration was now injurious to the state; and that the worthless restraints upon the Cæsars were only a cause of irritation or revolution. 'The image of the Republic,' as Tacitus calls it, alarmed the visions of these despots; and this was the reason why so many of them hallooed on the vile mob of Rome against the Senate, and so often proscribed its best and noblest members. So, too, the 'majesty of the Senate' was the name inscribed on the banners of Galba and Vitellius, and thus a mere incapable phantom became an instrument of revolution. Hence we cannot regret that,

henceforward, since a free government was no longer possible for Rome, the influence of the Senate becomes weaker and weaker, and that the unity and power of the Empire are made more perfect by the complete sovereignty subsequently attained by the emperors."*

* *The Times*, December 29, 1859.

LECTURE IV.

THE COLLISION—THE CELTS—THE TEUTONS—ATTILA AND THE HUNS—THE AVARS.

"Quum barbaries penitus commota gementem
Irrueret Rhodopen, et mixto turbine gentis,
Jam deserta suas in nos transfunderet Arctos;
Danubii totæ vomerent quum prœlia ripæ,
Quum Geticis ingens premeretur Mysia plaustris,
Flavaque Bistonios operirent agmina campos."

CLAUDIAN, *de Quarto Consulatu Honorii*, 49—54.

SYNOPSIS.—The CELTS:—Their first descent upon Italy to attack the Etrurians; besiege Rome under Brennus; join the expedition of Hannibal.—The Cimbri and Teutons repulsed by Marius.—Gaul completely subdued by Cæsar.—Romanized under the Emperors.—The TEUTONS:—Germans defy Cæsar under Ariovistus; slaughter the legions of Varus; never subdued by Rome.—Their various relations to the Empire till the irruption of the Barbarians, A.D. 376.—This year the Visigoths cross the Danube; forced onward by the Huns.—Sketch of the Gothic empire: its history.—War with the Eastern empire.—Battle of Adrianople: its results.—The TURANIANS and SLAVES:—The Huns in Central Asia divide into two branches; the western branch occupy the land of the Goths.—Relations with the Empire till the time of Attila.—The history of Attila; his quarrel with both Empires; establishes a barbarian empire of his own; loses the great battle of Châlons; again invades Italy; dies; his empire broken up.—Reappearance of Turanians in Europe, under the name of Avars; receive tribute from the Greek emperor; are pursued by the Turks; establish a powerful kingdom under Baian; reduce the Slaves; at war with the Greeks; form an alliance with the Persians; lay siege to Constantinople, and are repulsed.—Kingdom broken up by a revolt of the SLAVES under Samo.—Slavonians settled in South Europe by the Greek emperor.—Turanians reappear in the ninth century.—Hunugars and Maygars.

WITH this immeasurable mass of external barbarism, Rome came into contact by slow degrees. Many centuries elapsed during the process, which began by the conquest and assimilation of Gaul, and terminated by the collapse of

Italy under the pressure of the Germanic tribes. With the former, we have but little to do. The history of the Celtic Gauls had already terminated by absorption into that of their conquerors, even before the "origines" of modern history commence. The whole history of the Celtic race has been divided by their able historian, M. A. Thierry, into four periods. The first was that of nomad existence, when Asia, Europe, and Africa were alike visited by their roving bands. Their name became a terror to the world; they burnt Rome, plundered Delphi, settled themselves in the peninsula of Asia Minor, were found upon the banks of the Nile, laid siege to Carthage. The second period was that of national development and settled life. Their social characteristics were singular in themselves, and produced singular results. "One might deem," says Thierry, "that the theocracy of India, the feudality of the middle ages, and the democracy of Athens, had met in the same soil, and asserted, one after another, their supremacy." In Cisalpine Gaul this national life was affected by intercourse with Rome; in southern Gaul it was materially modified by Greek civilization; in the remaining part of the same country it partook of the gloom and rigour of the north. The third period comprises their struggle for existence with Rome, and their fall. Everywhere the Roman sword was the instrument employed by destiny to achieve their ruin. After two centuries of resistance, Italian Gaul at last succumbed. The Galatæ still bravely struggled in Asia Minor, when all the other nations of the East had accepted the yoke. It was only after a long and sanguinary war, after immense sufferings, and heroic efforts of patriotism, that Gaul proper bowed to Cæsar's exterminating sword. Beyond the ocean, the great Britannic leaders, Caractacus, Boadicea, Galgacus, renewed and continued the strife. Yet all this was only preparatory to the fourth period,—the period of the organization of Gaul into a Roman province, and of the complete

assimilation of the Celtic race. Of this we shall hereafter speak; at present we are to glance briefly at the relations of the Celts to Italy and the Roman empire. Tradition, as we just remarked, records the movements of warrior bands of Celts at early periods, even in what we are accustomed to regard the ancient history of Greece and Rome. Etrurian civilization was probably anterior to that of either, yet Etrurian civilization was disturbed by the roving Celts, who scaled the mighty barrier of the Alps and descended upon the fertile vales beneath. Under the name of Isambra, they settled in the basin of the Po, and spread their populous villages—towns they cannot be called—over its rich alluvial soil. Fresh tribes poured through those mountain-passes, which have ever been regarded as the gates of Italy, and surged up against the Cyclopean walls of the Etrurian cities. Suffering under one of those terrible inundations, Etruria called upon her rival, Rome. The young Republic, like an infant Hercules, defied the men of the north; she paid the penalty of her scorn in the defeat of her armies on the field of battle, and the slaughter of her senators and matrons in the Capitol. The Roman historians, with that national vanity which is perhaps pardonable when it forms a large ingredient in national greatness, assert that the celebrated Camillus avenged his countrymen, and put the Gauls to the sword in the very hour of victory, amid the devastation they had made. It is but little probable. There are traces of their presence for nearly twenty years upon the banks of the Tiber, and they did not depart without gold and spoil. Henceforth, for many years, the Gaul was a terrible reminiscence and a dangerous foe to Rome. A long and sanguinary struggle, in which her armies were often in peril, at last freed the Republic from the presence of these unwelcome strangers; but it required the skill and valour of one of her best soldiers,—Marcellus, the sword of Rome,—to effect the deliverance. The Gauls, however, were not destroyed, nor

even intimidated. The best and foremost of the soldiers of Hannibal, they nearly repeated, after the fatal field of Cannæ, the exploits of Brennus within the walls of the capital. After the Punic wars, Rome, inspired with vengeance and perhaps with alarm, turned and smote fiercely her ancient enemy. She carried the war beyond the Alps, and employing the Greek colony of Massilia, or Marseilles, as a *pied à terre*, pushed steadily her political influence among the tribes of the various Gallic confederacies. But now an unforeseen event, "immense and appalling as a second deluge," says Michelet, arrested the progress of Rome, and nearly swept her not only from Gaul, but from Italy itself. The Baltic, owing to some unknown convulsion of nature, burst its barriers. Flying before its waves, Gauls and Germans, Cymry, or Cimbri, and Teutons, rolled onward in immense multitudes towards the south. To their natural courage was added the stern goading of necessity and the fury of despair. Defeating a Roman army which attempted to bar their passage, they poured in to Gaul to the number of 300,000 warriors, exclusive of aged men, women, and children, who brought up the rear in the rude waggons of their nation. The living torrent passed on, leaving famine and desolation behind, sufferings so bitter that the wretched inhabitants in their dire extremity fed on human flesh. Arrived at the banks of the Rhine, they found themselves face to face with the Roman empire, that Roman empire which they or their kinsmen had encountered on the distant Danube, in Macedonia or in Thrace, and which seemed to their untutored minds to fill the world. Awestruck by the grandeur of the imperial image, they shrunk back with superstitious fear, and humbly asked the Romans to grant them lands which they were willing to purchase with the service of their swords. The request was refused; the Romans crossed the Rhine, and paid for their temerity by a defeat. Then, one consular army after another was cut to

pieces. Nothing but ignorance and a lingering dread of the great empire of the south kept these capricious barbarians beyond the Alps and saved the capital. But a terrible tragedy, enacted in Provence, soon excited as much alarm in Rome as if their standards could have been descried from the Janiculum. The Roman consul, C. Servilius Cæpio, about this time cruelly sacked Tolosa, now Toulouse, a town belonging to the Tectosages, a Gallic tribe who had cried for help to the kindred invaders. The booty he attempted by treachery to appropriate to his own use. This caused a quarrel with his colleague, and in the opinion of the age called down upon his devoted head the anger of the gods. Be this as it may, he chose to fight alone. In one of the most furiously-contested conflicts known in history, the Gauls exterminated him and his army of 80,000 soldiers, slaying every living being they found in either camp, and casting gold, silver, arms, and even horses, into the Rhone.

Italy was at their mercy. Happily for Rome and for the civilized world, the fascination which the south exercises upon northern minds, attracted them to the Pyrenees rather than to the Alps. But Rome knew that the descent upon Italy must come, and come at an early period. In her alarm, she called upon one of her most famous sons, Marius the Arpinate, who had been serving in Africa, to deliver her from this hitherto invincible enemy. "This hardy soldier, almost as terrible to his own country as to the enemy, and savage as the Cimbri he was about to oppose, was to Rome a saving god."* He wearied and outmanœuvred the barbarians in the south of France. They broke into two bodies; the Cimbri taking the road through Helvetia and Noricum, while the Teutons intended to carry the intrenched camp of Marius by storm, and, passing over the dead bodies of its defenders, to enter Italy by the passes of the maritime Alps. The general rendezvous was in the

* Michelet.

Lombard plains. It was on the latter body that the bolt of Roman vengeance first fell, and it was as sudden and as terrible in its effects as if it had really fulminated from the throne of Capitolian Jove. The Teutons, repulsed in a preliminary skirmish and reproached by their women, who themselves from the top of their waggons drove back the Roman legionaries, were wrought up to a pitch of frantic and fatal excitement. They precipitated themselves into a river. The Romans took them in the rear, and the battle soon became nothing but wild flight and exterminating slaughter. At the lowest computation, a hundred thousand men perished upon these bloody plains, which to this very hour retain in their appellation a signal memorial of that day of butchery. The traveller from the north who visits Pourrières, in Provence, the *Campi putridi* of the ancients, is reminded by a name redolent of corruption and the charnel-house, that his step is on the grave of his German sires. Nor are there wanting other memorials of the strife. The peasant long dressed his vines with the thigh-bones of the gigantic Teutons who fell upon that memorable field. A temple to Victory had been erected immediately after the battle; on its site arose the church of St. Victoire, and up to the era of the French revolution, an annual procession commemorated the deliverance of Rome. A pyramid raised in honour of Marius remained till the fifteenth century, and the town of Pourrières took for its municipal arms the Triumph of Marius as represented on a Roman bas-relief.

B.C. 102.

Meanwhile, the Cimbri were slowly winding their way through the defiles of the Noric Alps. They reached the neighbourhood of the rendezvous in the valley of the Adige; but their brethren were not there: they were feeding the raven and the kite in Gaul. The Cimbri, in ignorance of their fate, determined to await their arrival, and unhappily for themselves, omitted the opportunity of following the army of Catulus, which fell

back behind the Po. During this delay, the softer climate, the wines, and luxurious food of Italy, produced their usual effect upon the hardy frames of the northern savages. And what was still worse, Marius had time to throw himself between them and the capital. With true barbarian simplicity, they sent an embassy to Marius, and asked lands for themselves and their brethren. "Your brethren have the lands we have given them," said the Roman, "and will keep them for ever!" He then produced the captive Teutons who had followed his camp from Gaul. The Cimbri undismayed, bid him name the day and the place where he would fight for Italy. He appointed the third day, and some open ground near Vercelli. The Cimbri, utterly devoid of strategic skill, allowed themselves to be decoyed into a position with the sun and wind in their faces. The result was what Marius anticipated. Choked by the rolling clouds of dust and dazzled by the sun, the barbarians soon became an unmanageable mass, and with their crowded columns and rude weapons, which bent after the first stroke, made but an ineffectual resistance to the serried ranks of Rome, armed with that well-tempered and terrible broadsword which had cleft its way from the Latian plains to the Persian Gulf, and to the Pillars of Hercules. The men were cut to pieces. They had still to deal with the women; an easy prey it might seem to victorious legionaries. But the women were cast in no less heroic mould. Preferring death to dishonour, they first strangled their children, casting them beneath the wheels of their waggons, and then hung themselves, fastening the noose to the horns of their oxen to insure being trampled to pieces. Even the dogs of the horde fought to the death; it was necessary to call out and employ the light troops, who destroyed them with arrows. Thus did Rome escape her first great peril from the barbaric world. We have dwelt upon it, because *it was* the first, an antetaste of those dire and bloody struggles which were in after-ages to dye

B.C. 101.

the plains of Italy with Roman blood, and avenge long centuries of cruelty and crime. And we have also dwelt upon it because it explains the cause of that which is not well understood,—the determined and sanguinary perseverance with which Rome carried the sword amongst the Gallic tribes, and the successful efforts which she made to assimilate them to herself. Influenced by the remembrance of this alarm, and anxious to prevent its recurrence, or fired perhaps by the traditionary glories of his predecessor in the leadership of the popular party, the great Dictator descended from the Alps, resolved by fair means or by foul, to destroy all chance of peril for the future, and set his heel upon the neck of the adversary of Rome. To carry out this object he was ashamed of no subterfuge, and spared no blood. And indeed it is to the existence of this fixed purpose in his resolute mind that we are indebted for the birthday of our own civilization. He was told that Gaul perpetually derived aid from an island whose white cliffs were visible across a storm-tossed ocean from her northern shore. Here was the sacred seat of her religion, the stronghold of those fanatic priests, who could at any moment excite the savage Celtic race to a sanguinary fury. Hence then the determination of the Roman to extirpate the evil at its root, and hence the dawn of that long day of civilization and glory which has since shed its splendour upon the white-cliffed isle. Cæsar completely succeeded; but to do so he fought fourteen years without intermission, won battles on the Jura, among the volcanic passes of Auvergne, in Belgium, and in the Armorican peninsula; led large armies twice to the shores of the Western Ocean, and once across the Rhine, and
A.D. 70. is said to have sacrificed two millions of men. Then he changed his policy. He favoured Gaul and the Gauls in every possible way. Even the tribute which he was compelled to levy, he disguised under the honourable appellation of military pay. He enlisted the bravest Gallic warriors

under his standard, and they followed him fearlessly over the Alps and across the Rubicon to the gates of Rome. One distinguished legion was entirely composed of Gauls. From the crest which they wore upon their helmets, they were styled the "Legion of the Lark," no unfit symbol of the *gaieté de cœur* with which the Celtic warrior so often rushes upon death.* Henceforward no real opposition was organized by the Celtic race against Rome. Druidism in the time of Tiberius made a final effort under Sacrovir, a name which is perhaps only the Latin representative of "Druid;" but this, though aided by the Belgæ, said by Cæsar to be "the bravest of the Gauls," was speedily put down by the armies of the Rhine. The war waged in the time of Vespasian can hardly come under the category of revolt. It was a struggle for empire; but the empire would still have been Roman even had it rested in Gallic hands. Civilis, indeed, a Batavian, hated Rome with the hatred of a Hannibal, to whom he was fond of comparing himself, and, aided by the German national prophetess Velleda, obtained some considerable advantages over the Roman forces. A wild report that the Capitol had been burnt in the struggle between Otho and Vitellius, spread rapidly through the provinces, and the Druids, declaring that the Palladium of Rome, the pledge of her eternal existence, had perished, proclaimed that Gaul was to take her place as mistress of the world.† But when the armies sent against Civilis had disbanded; when tributaries and allies had joined the revolt; when the peril of Rome was imminent, and no Roman appeared to stem the torrent, the Empire was saved by a man of alien blood. Another Batavian, Cerealis, by displaying the eagles, soon renewed the allegiance of the recreant legionaries, and reduced both Civilis and Velleda to submission. Thoroughly cowed, they disclaimed the intention of carrying out any national movement, and alleged that

A.D. 28.

B.C. 58.

* Suetonius, Vit. Julii, c. 25. † Tacit. Hist. iv. 54.

they had only taken up arms in favour of Vespasian against Vitellius. Henceforward the influence of Gaul upon the Empire was as great as that of the Empire upon Gaul. Indeed, it had already been as great. Roman laws, customs, social habits, and political institutions, even the Roman language, were dominant in Gaul, properly so called, and nearly dominant in Britain. The only portion of the Celtic race who retained their independence and national characteristics were the hardy Pictish and Scottish mountaineers, who, under Galgacus, bared their painted breasts to the Roman broadsword, or in after-days descended from the Grampians upon the debateable land which lay between the walls of Hadrian and Antoninus, and pursued the retreating steps of Roman civilization to the very shores of the sea which rolled between them and Roman Gaul. There the Celt had become completely Latinized in feeling as well as in manners. His national sentiment was merged in the prouder sentiment of Roman citizenship; a magnificent temple arose at Lyons to the divinity of Augustus, and sixty statues, symbolizing the sixty states of Gaul, surrounded the statue of the emperor. The emperor Claudius, who was himself a Gaul by birth, readmitted, after Cæsar's example, Gauls into the Senate.* To furnish Germanicus with men, money, and horses, against the German enemy, was esteemed in Gaul an act of most exalted patriotism. The hardy races who for four-and-twenty years had resisted the sword of Cæsar, and extorted from him no scanty encomiums upon their energy and valour, are described by the historians of the Empire, as "rich and lazy." "Southern Gaul is not a province, it is Italy itself," says Pliny. Many of the men most distinguished for literature, politics, and arms in the

* "The oration which he pronounced upon this occasion, A.D. 48, and which is still preserved at Lyons on tablets of bronze, is the first authentic monument of our national history, the patent of our admission into this vast initiation of the world."—MICHELET, *Histoire de France*, i. 3.

late Roman annals were Gauls. Cornelius Gallus, the friend of Virgil, was a native of Frejus. M. Antonius, the leading orator of Rome, the teacher of Cicero and Cæsar, was a Gaulish slave. His countrymen ever after maintained a leading reputation for eloquence in the Roman courts. Trogus Pompeius, the first compiler of a universal history, was of Gaulish origin. Petronius, the father of Romance, was born near Marseilles. Nor were Gauls without a more direct influence upon the political destinies of the Empire. Vindex, who dethroned Nero, was a native of Aquitaine. Vespasian owed his elevation to "Baccas," or "Bec," born at Toulouse. Provence gave birth to Agricola, the first soldier and administrator of post-Christian Rome. Nismes gave to her the best emperor who ever sat upon the seat of the Cæsars, Antoninus Pius.

Rome then completely Latinized the Celt, assimilated him, made him her own. The Teuton was, morally speaking, of far less malleable materials, and was never assimilated to his foe. The relations of Rome with Germany were always those of war, generally war to the knife. Cæsar found in Ariovistus a spirit as haughty as his own, and soldiers as brave as the legionaries, prepared to contest the dominion of Gaul. His star did not desert him; he had his usual fortune in the conflict, and gained a victory. But, so far as Germany itself was concerned, the victory was a barren one. His laborious and skilful passage of the Rhine, undertaken with the object of spreading the terrors of the Roman name through all the central tribes of Germany, did not for a moment dismay those resolute savages, who boasted that they could uphold the heavens upon their lances, and had not slept beneath a roof for years. They renewed the struggle, and continued it until they stood as conquerors upon the Capitol. The darkest disaster in the Roman story, — a disaster which destroyed the prestige of her hitherto invincible arms, broke the heart of the

B.C. 58.

successful master of the world, and inspired the Roman mind with an alarm never afterwards wholly calmed,—
A.D. 9. was wrought by the sword of Arminius upon the helpless legions of Varus, in the dark recesses of the Teutoburger Wald.

It was something more than the loss of a certain number of men, good and tried soldiers though they were, which weighed upon the mind of Augustus on his deathbed. It was a foreboding of what was to come,—a sort of prophetic sentiment, which dimly saw, in these untamed sons of the forest, the inheritors of all his labours and of all the long glories of the Roman name.

Impressed with these ideas, he had, during his lifetime, sent the princes of the blood royal to combat on the German frontiers. After his death, Tiberius, who had won his own best laurels in this strife, continued the same policy. The ablest, most promising, and most popular prince of this era owed the greatest part of his reputation to the exploits on the banks of the Weser, from which he derived the surname of Germanicus. Many military operations, which may be partly traced in the chronological appendix at the close of this volume, show that the struggle between Rome and Germany was continued, with brief intermissions, during the three first centuries of the Empire. And although, as we have already seen, there was during this time no apprehension of the ultimate result, yet there is sufficient to show that the nations beyond the Rhine had begun to excite an attention not altogether unmingled with alarm. The very existence of the treatise of Tacitus, "De Moribus Germanorum," is a proof of this. And, indeed, in his other works the same writer uses language which shows that he did not altogether underrate the valour and exploits of these formidable neighbours. "Arminius," he says, "did not, like other monarchs and chiefs, assail the infancy of the Roman people; he assailed them at the summit of their

power and glory, often holding his own in battle, and never vanquished."*

"Twice, and twice only," exclaims Suetonius, "did Augustus suffer grievous and disgraceful defeat, and both times in Germany."† The historian Florus admits, with candour, that the Germans might rather be described as conquered in action, than subdued in war. "Upon the Roman empire," he says, "unbounded even by the ocean, the defeat of Varus imposed the limit of the Rhine."‡ And in the same spirit Tacitus speaks of the Roman emperors as celebrating triumphs over the Germans, rather than conquering them, a conquest, he adds, truly long in the achieving. More passages might easily be adduced, but these are sufficient to show that the force of the German genius and the German sword was not altogether unknown at Rome. And Rome in two ways indicated her appreciation of both. She availed herself of the turbulent character of the first to apply the Machiavellian maxim, "Divide and rule." "Oh that our foes would ever thus be ready to cut each other's throats; since in the declining destiny of an empire, fortune can grant no greater boon than the discord of its enemies."§ And the same philosophical observer acknowledges that to the prosecution of a policy like this, Rome owed more than to the force of arms.|| The second, the German sword, she bought off with gold, and employed in her own service. Even the great Dictator had done this. His Germanic legionaries won the battle of Pharsalia. For a long series of years the throne of those who succeded him was girt by the Goth and Frank, and guarded by their sturdy swords. The Prætorian life-guards of the emperor, in the time of Tiberius, according to the narrative of Tacitus, were Germans.¶ Many writers have condemned

* Ann. ii. 88.
† Vit. Oct. § 23.
‡ Flor. iv. 12.
§ Tac. Ger. 33.
|| Ann. ii. 26.
¶ Ann. i. 24.

this practice of barbarian enlistment, and seen in it one of the causes of the fall of the Empire. They do not see that it was a simple necessity. It may have taught the discipline of Rome to the enemies of Rome; but, without it, Rome could not have held Italy for a month. The degenerate rabble of foreigners and freedmen who filled her streets would not have stood a single shock of northern war; it would be as reasonable to array the Lazzaroni of Naples against the German or English bayonet.

Such, then,—and so widely different from those which she bore to Gaul,—were the relations of Rome to Germany, during the four centuries and a half that preceded the great crisis which historians have generally agreed to call the "Irruption of the barbarians." In the one race we may detect the elements of a vigorous natural life—development, progress, and dominion; in the other, the seeds of a national death — corruption, feebleness, decay. Gibbon has endeavoured to sneer away the virtues of our Teutonic ancestors; Adelung has visited them with a still more ungenerous and systematic depreciation; but there is no reason to dispute the general conclusions of a late writer:—

A.D. 376.

"That the Germans possessed a pre-eminent capacity for development, progress, and dominion, might be gathered from other works of Tacitus, even though the 'Germania' had not been written. The attitude which the Germans assumed towards the Romans on their first meeting in Gaul, and in their subsequent intercourse, was never that of mere savages. They did not, indeed, undervalue the Roman power; they knew that it was terrible, that it had hitherto been irresistible. They neither recklessly sought a collision with Cæsar, nor did they timidly shrink from it, when they thought their rights invaded; for they had a proud consciousness of what was in themselves. They were not overawed by the superiority which long ages of wealth and

civilization had conferred upon their opponents. They did not, as is the custom with mere savages, slink away before the face of those who came armed with the power of knowledge, and adorned by the arts of life; nor did they seek to denationalize themselves by slavishly aping what they could not readily acquire. They looked their superiors boldly and calmly in the face; they kept up their pride in their own race and name, and considered the Ubii degraded by the adoption of the Roman dress and manners. They quickly learned from their enemies what it suited their purpose to know. In the service of the Empire, they became the most skilful soldiers; they formed the bravest legions; they decided the fate of the most important battles; they furnished the ablest generals and statesmen,—men who, single-handed, sustained the imperial throne, yet, in the very heart of the emperor's palace, never ceased to be Germans. And when at last they threw themselves upon the Roman empire, with the determination to take possession of its fairest provinces, no difficulties and no disasters could deter them. Though often defeated, they were never conquered; a wave might roll back, but the tide advanced; they held firmly to their purpose till it was attained; they wrested the ball and sceptre from Roman hands, and have kept them until now."*

Our purpose does not require that we should particularize every incident in the relations of Rome to the external world between the final subjugation of Britain by Agricola, when she may be regarded as most strong, and the passage of the Danube by the Visigoths, when she was already on the brink of ruin. During this long period the barbarian world, like a cauldron, seething and foaming with its waters in a strange agitation, dashed race against race, throwing some up to the surface, and overwhelming others in a vortex of strife. The Alans

A.D. 85.

A.D. 376.

* The Franks, by W. C. Perry, ch. i. *ad finem.*

appear in the east, and assail the Parthian empire, which calls upon its ancient rival for aid. The Dacians cross the Danube, and are bought off by the gold of Domitian. Far in the depths of Central Asia the Huns begin to stir and divide into two great hordes. On the shores of the Baltic the ocean quits its bed, and produces a physical convulsion, which results in a like disturbance and displacement of the surrounding tribes. Sarmatians, Marcomanni, Quadi, Vandals, are forced southward, and, spreading far and wide, overleap the natural barriers which guard the sacred soil of Italy, and appear under the walls of Aquileia. Marcus Aurelius dies combating the last-named tribe.

A.D. 180.

Soon the Franks are seen for the first time upon the Rhine. In the year 241 A.D., the great Aurelian, the future conqueror of the East, overthrows them near Mayence. In 254 A.D. they invade Gaul, and make their way through Spain as far as Mauritania. Probus defeats them twice in 277 A.D., and settles some of them by the Black Sea. But the daring exiles set off in their frail barks, and, sailing up the Mediterranean, plunder all before them. They pass the Pillars of Hercules, and arrive at the mouth of the Rhine, where they disembark in safety. History records no more romantic exploit. In 293 A.D. Constantius settles a colony of them in Gaul. Julian has hard fighting with them in 358, but subdues the Salians.

A.D. 241—293.

About the middle of the third century, the terrible Goths are for the first time seen in force upon the frontier, and Decius dies in battle against them. Another ten years sees an act of doubtful policy, pregnant with danger to the destinies of Rome. In 271 A.D., Aurelian allows the Goths to settle in trans-Danubian Dacia, and the name of *Roman* Dacia is henceforward confined to part of Mœsia, south of the great river. The assaults of barbarism come

A.D. 251—271.

thick and fast. The Alemanni, a Teuton tribe of whom we have already spoken, force their way into Italy, and overrun the Umbrian plains. The danger becomes too obvious to be neglected, and the emperor Probus constructs that gigantic, but ineffectual rampart, described in a previous lecture. He exhibits towards the Franks the same timid policy with which Aurelian had treated the Goths, and grants them lands in Gaul. Circumstances rendered the transaction of grave importance. The fiscal tyranny of the Empire had by this time rendered life insupportable to the poorer provincials. Peasant insurrections, exact antetypes of the Jacquerie of later times, were raging with great fury throughout Gaul. Under the name of Bagaudæ,* these ignorant and desperate men had from time to time rendered whole districts a waste of bloodshed and devastation. The Frankish sword, enlisted in the service of Rome, seemed to the politic administrators, who, in dealing with her destinies, dreamt of little but revenue, an admirable curb for these savage spirits. They granted, therefore, lands to their Frank auxiliaries in those fair regions, which they never afterwards abandoned, and to which they have given a name second to none in the annals of European nations. Probus was slain in battle, notwithstanding his successes and his wall. The emperor Julian repeated the grant to another body of the Frankish confederation, who, receding before the barbarous Quadi, crossed the Rhine, and obtained a location in Brabant.

A.D. 276.

A.D. 358.

We have now reached the period when historians universally agree that the first great and permanent impulse towards its downfall was given by barbarism to the fabric of Roman power. Before this era there had been irruptions, settlements, and conflicts; but they were partial, of a mere local character, without any large and lasting

* The etymology of this word is very uncertain. See a long note in Michelet, i. 3.

influence upon the destinies of the Empire. Sarmatian horsemen, clad in complete steel, and stout Dacian infantry, were perpetually crossing the Danube, for plundering raids upon the opposite banks, and giving to the Roman generals who repulsed them the sterile honours of a triumph, or occasionally triumphing themselves, and defeating Italian armies in the field; but, upon the whole, they were driven back, probably by their own brethren serving beneath the Roman eagles.* But the passage of the Danube by the West Goths, in the year 376 A.D., was an event of a different character; for, from that time, Rome never recovered her imperial prestige; while the barbarian nations steadily advanced to the position of powerful and independent kingdoms. It is therefore desirable to describe, with somewhat more exactness, the causes which produced this memorable movement, and determined its direction.

At the period of which we are writing, the later decades of the fourth century, the populations belonging to the three great Teutonic, Slavonic, and Turanian or Mongol races, had become intermingled, and, so to speak, interlaced with each other, by the action of war and migration. In general terms, the Teuton held the Scandinavian peninsula, the countries on the right bank of the Rhine, the left bank of the Danube, and the northern coast of the Black Sea, almost as far as the river Tanais, or Don. The north-east of Europe, all the great Russian steppes, to the foot of the Ural Mountains, were occupied by the Turanian tribes, known as Fins or Zoumi, who were unceasingly recruited by exhaustless hordes, sweeping ever onward from the wilds of Tartary, upon their small but hardy steeds. The imagination requires some material assistance, such as that afforded by contemplating the admirable delineation of the earth's surface on the great globe of Mr. Wyld, before we can form any idea of the immen-

* Tac. Hist. i. 79; iii. 46.

sity of space included within the limits of northern and central Asia, or of its capacity to pour forth such mighty and unceasing tides of population. A movement of tribes beyond the Caspian Sea, occasioned by war or any other cause, and necessitating a change of locality, caused its pulsations to be felt far onward throughout eastern, and then through western Europe, to the very walls of the Roman fortresses along the Rhine. Thus it came to pass that the Asiatic tribes were ever exerting a pressure upon their barbarous neighbours, which gradually propelled them upon the Empire. The Slaves, in particular, conquered and thrown back by the Teutons on the south and west, felt the full weight of the Turanian migrations upon the east and north, and were compressed by their adversaries on both sides as within a vice, or between the legs of a compass, into central Europe. Of the existence of these outermost barbarians, the Romans had some small notion in the first century, but little more. A few vague words of Tacitus,* already quoted, describe the Fenni or Fins, as a race of marvellous ferocity, utterly destitute of all that constitutes the wealth of civilized life, clad in skins, feeding on the grass of the field, and living by the use of arrows, which they pointed with fish-bones for want of iron. Yet it was one of these wild races which proximately caused the fall of Rome.

As early as the second century of our era, the geographer Ptolemy† mentions the appearance of the Χοῦνοι, or, as the Latins called them, the Hunni, among the Slave populations on the banks of the Dnieper; and another writer speaks of them as camping between the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea, from which inaccessible locality they extended their plundering raids into Asia Minor.‡ This federation of nomad robbers appears to have gathered strength and consistency during the next hundred and fifty years. In the fourth

* Germ. § 46. † Ptol. iii. 5. ‡ Dion. Per. v. 730.

century we find them on both slopes of the Ural chain, extending nearly from the north pole to the Caspian, and ravaging at their will, Europe on the one side, and Asia on the other. Jornandes, the Gothic historian of this period, or, more correctly, the abridger of the great work of Cassiodorus upon the annals of his countrymen, tells us in his characteristic style, that the stem of the Hunnic stock "budded forth into two infuriated branches" (*in bifariam populorum rabiem pullulârunt*).* Of these, the eastern branch, much less hideous than the other, say the Greek historians, gave to themselves the appellation of White Huns. Their locality was the neighbourhood of the Caspian Sea. The western, or Black Huns, turned towards Europe. M. Thierry, unwilling to plunge into the labyrinth of doubt and conjecture in which modern learning has lost itself more than once upon this subject, states, nevertheless, his conviction that the "domination Hunnique" included the Turkish tribes towards the east, the Fins on the west, and a sovereign Mongol race much more decidedly Asiatic in its attributes than the Fins. It is at least, as we have already seen, under an exaggerated form of the Mongol type, that contemporary history describes Attila and his formidable horsemen. The Goths, who had by this time attained to a high comparative civilization, were, of all the Teuton tribes, most harassed and appalled by the apparition of the Black Huns upon their borders. In their alarm they indulged in the wildest imaginations. Jornandes ascribes to these strangers a birth half human, half demoniacal, and tells us they were at first a puny race, dwelling among morasses, hideous to look upon, and possessing no other connection with humanity than the faculty of speech.† The Goths themselves were the greatest of all the barbarian tribes which overthrew the Empire, whether we consider the exploits they performed, or the

* De Reb. Get. § 24. † *Ibid.* § 8.

nationalities which they founded.* Other races may have been more distinguished in special qualities;—the Vandals for policy, the Lombards for nobleness of nature, the Franks for fury in the day of battle, the Burgundians for mechanical skill; but the great Ostrogoth and Visigoth dominations in Italy, Gaul, and Spain, fill a larger space than that of any others in the picture which this critical period of history presents; for the Frank empire of Charlemagne seems to belong to a different epoch, and to be of a different character. Many writers have spoken of the Scandinavian peninsula as the earliest ascertained home of the Gothic tribes. It is certain that, owing to some convulsion of nature or some social necessity, arising from increase of numbers, they descended in company with the Gepidæ, a kindred people, upon the Slavic populations which lay to the south of them, and from thence upon the frontiers of the Roman empire. As this is the first formal mention of them in history, their original locality has generally been said to have lain on the shores of the Baltic. But, as we might expect from the ethnological theory of migration already explained, there are traces of the Goths before they ever reached the countries which we call Denmark and Sweden. They are supposed to have occupied Boiohemum, as Bohemia was then called, in common with the Marcomanni; or, according to another account, they were spread about the sources of the Vistula. The progress of their northern conquest may be traced by the names of Gothia, Codanus sinus, and Jutland; for the Jutes were only Goths under a slightly-varied appellative. When, however, they re-descended to the south, they vanquished the Venedi, the Burgundians, the Roxolani, the Jazyges, and the Finni, extending themselves by degrees

* The etymology seems tolerably certain. *Goth* is equivalent to the Saxon *Guth*, or *Yuth*—"war" or "battle." Hence also *Jute*, *Jutland*. From the same root comes "God," who is, in a Teuton imagination, the first and greatest of warriors.

from the Vistula and the Theiss to the Volga. They may henceforth be considered as consisting of three great communities, — the Gepidæ, who dwelt to the north of the two divisions of the Bastarnic Alps, or the eastern range of the Carpathians; and the Goth, properly so called. The latter, upon arriving at the banks of the Borysthenes, the modern Dnieper, divided into two bodies. One of them, crossing the stream, and extending themselves as far as the Volga, assumed the name of East Goths, or Ostrogoths. The remaining division were content to stretch themselves in the opposite direction, and, under the name of Visigoths, or West Goths, occupied almost all the ground between the Borysthenes and the Theiss. It is beside our purpose to dwell upon their relations with the Roman empire before the time of their final passage of the Danube. They were formidable and turbulent neighbours. More than once, in the reigns of Maximin, Gordian, and Decius, they crossed the frontier river, ravaged the Roman territory, and even captured important cities, as was the case with Philippopolis; they imposed a tribute upon the emperor Gratian, were repulsed by Claudius II., and occupied part of Dacia, which the Romans abandoned in despair. But, undoubtedly, their most remarkable exploit was an earlier one—the conquest of the little kingdom of the Bosphorus, a dependency of Rome, and the passage of the straits, in flat-bottomed boats, covered with a sort of penthouse, and entirely constructed without iron. The siege and capture of Trebizond, whose spoils filled their ships, and whose mariners, chained to the oar, navigated them back to the European shore, was the chief result of this first adventurous enterprise. A second passage of the straits, with increased forces, placed the rich cities of Bithynia and Asia Minor in their hands. It was followed by a third, in which perished the world-renowned fane of the Ephesian Diana,

A.D. 235—251.

A.D. 269.

A.D. 274.

and, as we may imagine, the vested interests of the craftsmen in silver shrines who persecuted St. Paul. Almost the same epoch beheld these invincible barbarians traverse Greece and menace Italy; dismantle the Parthenon, and threaten to spoil the Capitol. They were finally defeated, as we have said, by Claudius II., A.D. 269, in several engagements, through Mœsia, Thrace, and Macedonia; and, finally, at Naissus, in Dardania, where they are said to have left 50,000 men upon the field. Aurelian, "*restitutor orbis*,"—the restorer of the world,—vindicated in part his title to that name by the expulsion of the Goths from Thrace. His successor Probus claimed a similar triumph over these unwearied adversaries, yet was constrained to build against them his celebrated rampart from the Danube to the Rhine, still known as the Teufels-mauer, or Devil's Wall, by the Suabian boor. The great Constantine, though wielding the now united forces of the Empire, and directing them with consummate skill, can only be described as "successful" against the Goths, whom he subdued by policy, rather than by force of arms. Availing himself of a war in which they were engaged against the Sarmatians, he assisted the latter to inflict upon their and his enemies some rude blows; but the concessions in the treaty of peace, concluded almost immediately, do not seem to imply any very solid success. It is, at any rate, time for us to turn to an event which rendered nugatory all these "successes" and "triumphs," and has justly been regarded by historians as the "beginning of the end,"—the disastrous passage of the Danube by the barbarian destroyers of the old Roman world.

A.D. 260.

A.D. 270.

A.D. 276—282.

A.D. 332.

The Visigoths, as we have seen, the nearer neighbours of the Empire, acting sometimes as its enemies and sometimes as its allies, gradually acquired a footing in Dacia and on the Danube. The Ostrogoths had to deal with the bar-

barous tribes of Slavic or Sarmatian descent, who encircled them on every side. By their wise policy, valour and skill in war, they obtained a positive ascendancy, and founded a considerable empire, long the glory of the Gothic name, and widely celebrated among the traditions of their race. From the Baltic to the Tanais the name of the Gothic king was feared, and his word very generally obeyed. All nations have their heroic sovereign, their Charlemagne, St. Louis, Alfred, Peter, Frederick the Great. In ancient Ostrogoth annals this place is occupied by Ermanaric, of the Amal race, whom Jornandes* compares to Alexander the Great, for his personal qualities and the extent of his conquests. The list of the latter, enumerated by the same historian, would convey little information to modern ears. We are, however, enabled to gather from it that not Slaves alone, but tribes of kindred Germanic origin, such as the Gepidæ, and even the Visigoths, felt the weight of his iron hand. As nearly as can be now made out, his dominions included southern Russia, Lithuania, Courland, the Polish provinces, with great part of Germany; and the Byzantine emperors were perhaps more indebted to fortune than any other cause for their successful resistance to his advance towards the Bosphorus. Among the tribes subject to this Ostrogoth empire were the Roxolani, who dwelt beside the Tanais. In the restlessness of enforced submission, they intrigued with the stranger. A plot was discovered, organized by a Roxolan chief, having for its object the introduction of the Huns. The aged monarch, now upwards of a hundred years old, broke out into his native fury. He had the wife of the conspirator torn in pieces by wild horses. Her brothers enticed the old man into an ambush, and attempted to poniard him. Though of immense age, he survived the attack; but while he was recovering from his wounds, the

Circ. A.D. 350.

* Reb. Get. § 23. Cf. Amm. Marc. xxxi. 3, "Ermenrichi latè patentes et uberes agros bellicosissimi regis."

Huns determined to accept the overtures which had been made to them, and commenced their advance. Such seem to have been the facts of the case; but the superstitious fancy of the Goths in after-times assigned to the agency of demons an event so terrible to their fortunes. An evil spirit, in the shape of a hind, was said to have guided the Hunnic hunters from place to place, till at last they reached the Gothic frontier, when it immediately disappeared. This was in the year 374 A.D. The Huns first came in contact with the Alans, a pastoral people who inhabited the steppe between the Volga and the Don. Incapable of offering any effectual resistance, the Alans united themselves to the immense hordes which formed the invading army, and then this "tempest of nations," as Jornandes calls them, burst upon the Ostrogoth empire.* The old king, unable to sustain the ignominy of defeat, stabbed himself to the heart: the nation were compelled to submit. It was next the turn of the Visigoths. They attempted to defend the line of the Dniester, but soon fell back upon the Pruth, from which they imagined they should still find an inaccessible retreat among the Carpathian Mountains in their rear. But the Visigoth kingdom was at this time a divided house; there was a Christian party and an old conservative pagan party, who abominated and persecuted the Christians. The sympathies of the latter were naturally directed towards Rome, and they were determined to seek an asylum within her dominions, "far away," writes the historian, "from all knowledge of the barbarians."† Athanaric, the leader of the opposite party, opposed the resolution with vehemence. He had sworn an oath of eternal hatred to Rome; he had solemnly pledged himself never to set foot upon her soil. But his influence was counteracted by a man very remarkable in the annals of German literature, as well as in those of the Christian faith. The Gothic bishop Ulphilas, de-

* Reb. Get. § 24. † Amm. Mar. xxxi. 3.

scended from some captive Roman family, and educated under the eye of Christian parents, had been, at a very early age, sent upon a mission to Constantinople, where Constantine the Great, in pursuance of his fixed policy, caused him, despite his years, to be consecrated bishop by his own chaplain, Eusebius of Nicomedia. From that moment the virtuous and simple-minded Goth was devoted, heart and soul, to the conversion of his countrymen. For the purpose of introducing among them a translation of the Scriptures, he constructed a Gothic alphabet, based upon the Greek character, which may be regarded as the origin of German literature. A specimen of this singular work, the earliest birth of the prolific German mind, may be seen in the elegant compendium of German literature edited by Professor Max Müller, of Oxford. The story of the translation is well known. The worthy bishop entirely omitted the book of Kings, conceiving that the martial exploits of the Jewish people would kindle into too fierce a flame the belligerent spirit of his children, who, as the historian quaintly says, "required the bit in this matter, rather than the spur." To such a man, no wonder that the Danube seemed a Jordan, beyond which lay a promised land of peace. He therefore threw himself with eagerness into the idea, and volunteered his advocacy with the Greek emperor Valens, who was then at Antioch. Valens was an Arian, and a controversialist, in an age when controversialists would compass sea and land to make one proselyte. When the poor bishop applied for aid in his dire extremity, he persecuted him with discussions on the hypostatic union. All along the road to Antioch he placed relays of disputants, who, under pretext of civil attentions, pressed upon him unceasingly the necessity of repudiating the confession of Nice, and recurring to that of Rimini, which he had previously recanted. The unfortunate bishop was in despair. His countrymen were camped upon the banks of the Danube,

and suffering grievously from want of food: behind them were the Huns, whose horsemen they hourly expected to behold upon the horizon; before them was a mighty river, swollen with rain. Many attempted to cross, but they and their frail rafts were instantly dashed to pieces by the Roman military engines. Ulphilas, a simple-minded man, was easily persuaded that the whole theological discussion only involved metaphysical subtleties, which should not for a moment be placed in comparison with the fate of a perishing people. He assented to the emperor's proposition, and engaged, upon the part of the Gothic nation, that they should adopt the Arian confession, the emperor, on his part, consenting to appoint commissioners for the purpose of assigning to them lands upon the Roman bank of the Danube. Hence arose for Christendom long schism and violent persecutions,—for the Goths soon adopted the ordinary zeal of converts,—and for Rome, a series of events which terminated in her destruction. Upon the return of Ulphilas, the Roman commissioners conveyed the Visigoths across the Danube, according to the terms of the agreement,—first the women and children, and subsequently the men without arms. The unromantic old soldier who recounts the transaction, breaks out into quite a poetic style. As he speaks of the "numbers numberless" who night and day were ferried across the stream in rafts, and skiffs, and even hollowed trees, he is reminded of the hosts of Xerxes,* of the Cimbri and Teutons pouring over the Alps. "They came," he says, "like ashes from Etna in eruption. The individuals appointed to count the multitudes sank hopelessly under the task. Should a man ask their number,

> 'Libyci velit æquoris idem
> Discere quam multæ Zephyro volvantur arenæ!'"†

Then commenced a scene which contemporary historians, though accustomed to deeds of violence and depravity, re-

* Amm. Mar. xxi. 4. † Virgil, Geor. ii. 105.

cord with sentiments of marked abhorrence. The corrupt Roman officials seized upon the Gothic matrons of stately figure, and the fair-haired and blue-eyed maidens, for their paramours. Nor was this all: many of the most vigorous youths were entrapped and sold into slavery. The multitudes who had crossed the stream in dependence upon the emperor's promise of support, were cheated, fed upon the most unclean food, furnished to them at an extravagant price, or starved to death. A single pound of bread could only be obtained by the payment of a slave; a small quantity of meat was sold for ten pounds of silver. Treachery was added to their other wrongs. Lupicinus, the Roman commandant, invited the Gothic chiefs, Fridigern and Alavivus, to a banquet, and attempted their assassination. The young men owed their escape to the swiftness of their horses. Infuriated by the treatment which they themselves, their countrymen and countrywomen, had received, they organized an implacable revolt against the Roman power. Success in several skirmishes furnished them with arms,—indeed, they had most imperfectly observed the part of the compact which provided that they should lay them aside. They swept everything before them with fire and sword; plundered towns, villages, and private dwellings; and spared neither sex nor age. This ravage continued for more than a year; fresh bands crossed the Danube in combination with Alans and Huns. The regents of the Ostrogoths, Alatheus and Saphrax, made common cause with their former foes, and joined the inroad. This news roused Valens from his theological reveries in the East; the spirit of the old soldier revived within him, and it was further inflamed by the flattery of his ignorant courtiers, who urged him to make an end of the insolent enemy, before Gratian, the western emperor, who was marching to his aid, could arrive to share and diminish the honours of victory.

A.D. 378.

On the 9th of August, the two armies met on the plains of Adrianople, amid clouds of dust, and under a scorching sun.

The impetuosity of Valens and his contempt of the enemy ruined all. The Romans, drawn into a false position, blinded and confused, were hewn down in indiscriminate slaughter. The unhappy emperor either fell upon the field of battle, or met with a still more miserable death upon the night after the action, in a wretched cottage where he had taken refuge, and which some Gothic plunderers set on fire. Four counts of the Empire, with six-and-thirty other officers of distinction, were left upon the bloody field. The victors attempted to capture Adrianople, but being unfurnished with the means of taking the city, and, like all barbarians, unskilled in sieges, they were compelled to abandon the design, and advanced directly upon the eastern capital. Here, however, they encountered still greater impediments. Returning, therefore, upon their steps, they ravaged the provinces of Macedonia, Thrace, and Illyricum, with an unrelenting cruelty, which seemed to the ecclesiastical historians of the time the direct judgment of Heaven, as denounced by the terrible language of the ancient prophets. The fury of the Goths, says St. Jerome, extended to all creatures possessed of life; the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, the fish of the sea, they mercilessly destroyed them all! Such were the results of the battle of Adrianople. No day so disastrous had dawned for Rome, say contemporary writers, since the fatal field of Cannæ. But from Cannæ she recovered with regenerated strength and splendour; it was not so in this case. The immediate effects, indeed, of the battle of Adrianople, so far as the Eastern empire was concerned, were arrested by the prudence and resolution of Valens' successor, the great Theodosius; but its effects upon the empire of the West were never remedied. The Goths, repulsed before the ramparts of Constantinople, which still sustained the shadowy power of the Greek Cæsars, turned their thoughts to the fallen and more undefended West. Nor had they long to wait. Five years before the close of

the century, Rufinus, a Gaul by birth, minister of Arcadius, sent the Visigoths over the Alps.* Then began that "Hourra" of the Northern nations upon Rome, the recital of which would form a long and terrible drama of blood. Its first act concludes with the sack of the Eternal City, by Alaric, king of the Goths. But these things belong to the story of Italy, upon which we shall enter in the next Lecture. At present we must speak of the fortunes of an empire which, including regions as extensive as those under the sway of Rome, threatened at one time to establish an equilibrium between barbarism and civilization; an equilibrium which the superior physical force of the first would speedily have disturbed, had its social strength and power of political cohesion corresponded to its means of conquest.

It was, as we have seen, the inroad of the Hunnish hordes which precipitated the Ostrogoths upon the Visigoths, and the latter upon the Eastern empire. The Ostrogoths, for the time at least, completely succumbed, and professed allegiance to the victors. "The Ostrogoth," writes Jornandes,† "after the death of their king Ermanaric, were completely separated from the Visigoths, and, submitting to the Huns, remained in their own country." Into the wide regions vacated by the Visigoth migration, the Hunnish horsemen poured, as the tempest pours into the rarified regions of the atmosphere. Living by rapine, and having no fixed settlements in one spot, they wandered far and wide along the Danube, generally avoiding conflict with the Empire, but assailing, and subduing, or displacing the barbaric tribes who dwelt upon the frontier. Upon the latter, their coming produced something like the effect of a strange animal in an ant-hill. All was confusion, agitation, and a perpetual hurrying to and fro, hardly to be grasped by the eye, and certainly incapable of being delineated by the pen.

* *Vide* Lecture V. † Jornandes, de Reb. Get. c. 48.

The indications of settled life and transient civilization which had arisen along the line of the Roman empire, from the Black Sea to the Gaulish cities, disappeared, and the nomad life of Asia was introduced into the heart of Europe. Aëtius, the Roman patrician, in an evil hour, availed himself of the aid of the Hunnish chieftain Rona, in the confusion which ensued in the West upon the death of Honorius. The Huns were not actually engaged in any combat, but they claimed Pannonia as their reward, nor did Aëtius dare to refuse. Along with the province, he conferred upon the Hun the title of "General of the Roman armies," and disguised the degradation of a large yearly tribute under the name of "military pay." Hence the connection in their early life between Attila, the nephew of Rona, and the Roman Aëtius, and the anomaly that Attila, the most terrible adversary of Rome, should have been a titular commander of her forces. Of this hereafter. As yet, no powerful intellect had been found to combine these nomads into a nation, and render them formidable to the world by concentrating their strength, as it was in after-ages concentrated, by Timour or Tchengis-khan. Black Huns and White Huns, rolling wave after wave into Europe, and following the standards of rival chieftains, always jealous of each other, and often openly at war, were incapable of the organized and united action which would have enabled them to contend against the Empire. Yet, as they ploughed no fields and planted no seed, to the Empire they were compelled to look for food when they had exhausted the scanty stores of the Teuton and Sarmatian tribes whom they drove before them. We hear of them, accordingly, as mercenaries in the service of Rome, and they fought for her well against the Goths, and against one another. It was a charge of Hunnic cavalry in the service of Honorius which, at the battle of Florence, decided the defeat of Radagasius, and saved Rome for a short season from the fate which she experienced at the hand of Alaric. It was a Hun who sent to Arcadius the head

of a Gothic general, Gainas, taken in open revolt against Rome, in his unavailing place of refuge beyond the Danube. For the first fifty years, therefore, after their arrival in Southern Europe, their relations with the Empire were peaceful enough, and the latter gladly made use of them as a counterpoise to the growing power of the Goths. But though they did not directly turn their own arms against Italy or Constantinople, their advent was the indirect cause of formidable and permanent encroachments upon the imperial territory. The tribes whom they displaced appear to have gathered as it were into two great bodies, and projected themselves by different routes upon those regions of the civilized world where they hoped to win subsistence by their swords. One immense army, consisting of 200,000 warriors, crossed the Tyrolese Alps under Radagasius, and made straight for the gates of Florence.* Sitting down before the city, they attempted to besiege it; but from want of strategic skill, were soon themselves cut off, and beleaguered by the forces of Stilicho; as were the Athenians at Syracuse, and ourselves at Sebastopol. The result was fatal to the barbarians, and to the fair fame of Stilicho; for Radagasius, having been entrapped into a surrender, was treacherously beheaded, while his followers were sold for slaves, and dispersed throughout the Italian cities. The fortunes of the other division were more prosperous. A great multitude, composed of Burgundians, Vandals, Alans, and Suevi, burst over the Rhine, easily overcoming the feeble resistance offered by the Ripuarian Franks. They speedily made the whole country the prey of their bow and spear, and after dividing it among themselves, crossed the Pyrenees, and founded the first barbarian kingdoms in the Iberian peninsula. This is the invasion of which Gibbon declares that it sealed the fate of Roman

A.D. 405.

A.D. 406.

* Zosimus, v. 26.

civilization, because the tribes composing it never again retraced their steps. The Roman garrisons were withdrawn from the more distant parts of the Empire to protect Italy. The fortresses were dismantled on the Rhine, and Gaul left exposed to their fury. For a period of four years they ravaged its seven provinces, and then passed, as we have said, over the Pyrenees into Spain.

To their fortunes we shall recur hereafter; meanwhile we must follow the progress of the Huns. Gradually advancing towards the west, they came in contact with the remainder of the Burgundians who had not yet crossed the Rhine. They were pagans, but, alarmed by the approach of the irresistible Asiatics, they applied to a bishop amongst their already Christianized brethren on the opposite bank of the river, for the rite of baptism. Believing themselves invincible in their new faith, they attacked the Huns and cut them to pieces. The Hunnish monarch, Oktar, died during the course of the night, and the event they interpreted as an interposition in their favour, like that which smote the hosts of Sennacherib beneath the walls of Jerusalem. A day of vengeance was soon to come. Oktar was one of four brothers, all of them chieftains of their race. The authority of the whole four was soon to be concentrated in the son of one of them, Attila, or Etzel, the youngest child of Mourzoukh, surnamed by the nations whom he swept with the besom of destruction, "the Scourge of God." The name itself, in the Hunnic dialect, is identical with that of the Volga, which river has received its modern appellation from the Bulgarians. We may therefore suppose him to have been born upon its banks at the latter end of the third century. Upon his father's death he succeeded to a joint authority over the tribe with his elder brother Bleda. The latter soon vanished from the scene, murdered by his brother's treachery, says Jornandes, and we find Attila, by the force of a genius for

war and policy seldom equalled, never perhaps surpassed, gradually drawing all power into his own hands, and gathering to his standard not only the Huns who had already reached central Europe, but vast numbers of their wilder kinsmen from regions far beyond the Caspian, and all the barbarian tribes whom they had subdued. One of Attila's uncles, Rona, had perhaps anticipated the ambitious conceptions of his nephew. Accurately acquainted with the condition of the Empire through his relations with the Roman patrician Aëtius, he boldly asserted that it was the destiny of the Huns to divide the world with its ancient mistress, and claimed as their heritage all countries north of the Danube, while he conceded those on the south to Rome. Certain tribes who dwelt within the limits thus reserved by the Hunnic monarch for himself, ventured to make an alliance with the Byzantine court. Rona instantly protested, called the Greek emperor to account, and insisted upon a conference to settle the question. During the interval of preparation he died, and it was to the young chieftains, Bleda and Attila, that the imperial envoys addressed themselves, in an audience granted to them on a plain upon the right bank of the Danube, near the Roman city of Margus. Attila was resolved to carry out his uncle's policy: he showed himself haughty and unyielding:—"Break off at once all connection with the ultra-Danubian tribes; restore your captives; form no alliance with any tribe or people against the Huns; increase your tribute, or if you choose to call it so, your payment for military service, from 300 to 700 pounds of gold. Do this, or war." To every attempt at explanation or remonstrance there was but one answer, "This, or war." The unfortunate envoys, who had orders to conclude "peace at any price," were obliged to give way, and thus was concluded the famous treaty of Margus, with which Attila so often menaced the Empire. The ambitious dream of Rona soon became the

A.D. 434.

fixed idea of his abler nephew; and in devoting himself to its accomplishment he was determined to spare neither friend nor foe. One after another, every existing power in his own race and in the barbarian world beyond the Danube and the Rhine, was made the vassal of his will. Then "this terror of the universe," this man "born to shake the world," as Jornandes calls him,* turned upon his only remaining rivals. His first attempt was against the Eastern empire.

In all ages of the world an ambitious monarch at the head of some half-million of well-trained soldiers has always easily found a pretext for war. The pretext in the present case was a sufficiently idle one. It was pretended that the Roman bishop of Margus had surreptitiously introduced himself into the sepulchre of the Hunnic kings, and stolen from it the buried treasure. A.D. 441. The Huns immediately fell upon a Roman town during the time of a fair, and pillaged everything before them, slaying the men and carrying off the women. To all complaints from Constantinople the answer was, "The bishop, or your lives." The emperor thought, and with reason, that to give up an innocent man to be massacred, would be displeasing to Heaven, would alienate the clergy, and only appease for a moment the demands of his merciless enemy. He refused, though timidly and in vague terms. The Huns replied by scouring Pannonia, laying Sirmium, its capital, in ruins, and extending their ravages far south of the Danube to the cities of Naissa and Sardica, upon both of which they wrought the extremity of their vengeance. A truce of four years only increased their fury and aggravated its effects. The war was suddenly recommenced. This time they A.D. 446. reached Thessaly, and renewed with a somewhat similar result the far-famed passage of Thermopylæ by the hordes of Xerxes. Two Roman armies were put to complete rout, and

* Jornandes, de Reb. Get. c. 35.

seventy cities levelled to the ground. Theodosius purchased the redemption of his capital by the cession of territory extending for fifteen days' journey south of the Danube, by an immediate payment of 6,000 pounds of gold, and the promise of 2,000 more as an annual tribute. It may be doubted whether he might not as well have thrown open its gates and combated the enemy in the streets. So frightful was the pressure of this demand upon the upper classes, that many families were reduced to abject poverty, starved to death, or hung themselves in their despair.

Perhaps Attila was satisfied with his success, perhaps he respected the strong defences of Constantinople. At any rate, he turned his thoughts to the less exhausted fields of the Western empire. With a policy well worthy of his barbaric astuteness, he determined to smite her through Gaul. The Visigoths, displaced from their eastern possessions by the advent of his ancestors, had established there a flourishing kingdom, which maintained somewhat dubious relations with the imperial court beyond the Alps. At present, however, Goths and Romans were at peace. The Hun resolved to play off one against the other; he therefore at the same time menaced and courted both. To the Romans he professed that, in his capacity of general of the Empire, his only object was to punish their faithless servants the Goths. To the Goths he proclaimed that he was about to set them free from Roman chains. In the mean time, he assembled a vast army for the invasion of Gaul. His pretext for quarrel with the Western empire was as characteristic as the affair of Margus. When the Huns were besieging Sirmium, the bishop of the town, by way of preserving the sacred vessels of his church, got them by some means into the hands of Attila's own secretary, Constancius, a Gaul. The latter pledged the vases to a Roman dealer, a certain Sylvanus. The pledge not being

redeemed, Sylvanus, as he had an undoubted right to do, sold the vessels to an Italian bishop for his church. The transaction reached the ears of Attila. He instantly crucified his secretary, claimed the vessels as his own, and demanded either their restoration or the person of Sylvanus. The vessels having been employed for a consecrated purpose, could not be placed in the hands of an unbelieving pagan, and Sylvanus had committed no crime at all, still less one deserving of crucifixion. It was in vain that all sorts of compromise and pecuniary compensation were suggested. The answer was as usual, "Sylvanus, or the vessels." This, it must be admitted, was "a very pretty quarrel as it stood," but the cunning Hun had another in reserve. Long before this the Princess Honoria, sister of the Emperor Valentinian, in a fit of very un-Roman romance, or more probably of feminine spitefulness, having been banished to Constantinople for some suspected intrigue, and condemned to conventual life, adopted the singular expedient of transmitting her ring as a *gage d'amour* to the redoubtable and repulsive barbarian whose name was in every mouth at Constantinople. The king of the Huns had the usual oriental notions about women, and was therefore very little likely to appreciate such advances; but though unassailable by love, he was fully alive to policy. He foresaw the possibility of making political capital out of the affair, and retained the ring. What use he made of it we shall presently see, but in the mean time, while meditating the destruction of Rome, he received news from Constantinople which roused him to the utmost pitch of indignation. The Eastern sceptre had fallen into a strong grasp. Theodosius having been killed by a fall from his horse, his sister Pulcheria was proclaimed Empress of the East. She bestowed her hand on Marcian, a man of courage and a soldier, who speedily informed Attila that he was perfectly willing to meet him as a friend, and

pay him as an ally; but that if he made his appearance in the character of a foe, he should find an army as able as it would be willing to repel his aggression. The barbarian blood flamed up at this defiance. It was retorted with interest. On the same day, and at the same hour, the messengers of the Hun presented themselves before the emperors of the East and West charged with the same message: "Attila, thy lord and mine, bids thee prepare for him a palace,—for he comes." The tragedian Seneca paints in some spirited lines a tiger by the banks of the Ganges, gazing on two well-fed steers, and rolling his glaring eyeballs from one to the other, uncertain upon which he shall first spring. It is no unfitting image of the fierce barbarian standing for a moment in doubt whether he shall fall in his fury upon Constantinople or upon Rome. Strategic considerations, as well as those of policy, turned him towards the last. We have seen his pretexts for war; another soon offered itself, and at the same time suggested the mode in which his armies should operate. The Franks had established themselves upon the lower Rhine, somewhere in modern Belgium, and had chosen for hereditary monarchs the "long-haired" or "free-born" Merovingian family, by the ancient and picturesque custom of elevating the future sovereign on a buckler. Clodion was the first who received this dignity, and for twenty years he ruled his rude warriors with prudence, and, despite the Roman opposition, extended his dominion by their valour. At his death he left two sons. Discord, as was so often the case, arose between the brothers. Meroveus, the younger, sought the aid of Rome, and was, according to the fashion of the times, adopted by Aëtius. The elder threw himself into the arms of Attila, and offered as the price of his assistance the passage of the Rhine. This was precisely what the Hun desired. Nor was internal treachery wanting.

A.D. 450.

A.D. 420.

Gaul, as we have seen, was harassed by the insurrection of its miserable and oppressed peasantry or Bagaudæ. One of these insurrectionary chieftains, a physician named Eudoxus, pursued by Roman vengeance, took refuge with Attila, and promised him the aid of all the brigands, criminals, and revolted peasants in the country. The astute monarch availed himself of the local knowledge of the fugitive, but before committing his fortunes to the chances of war, he determined to strengthen himself by an alliance with Genseric, king of the Vandals, who had by this time become masters of Africa, a foe almost as formidable to Rome as Attila himself. Genseric had attempted a design as ambitious as that of Attila,—a federation of all the barbarians quartered in the Empire against its authority, and had for this purpose married his son to the daughter of Theodoric, the Visigothic king of the south of France. The unfortunate girl having excited her husband's suspicion, he mutilated her features in a frightful manner, and sent her back in this condition to her royal father. This insult he knew would produce eternal enmity between Visigoth and Vandal, and therefore he eagerly courted, by lavish presents, the friendship of the common enemy of both. Attila no less eagerly responded, and the two concerted a combined attack upon Italy from the Alps and from the Mediterranean. All things seemed to indicate that the decisive hour was at hand, and the monarch of the Huns gathered up his strength for the effort. All the realms of barbarism, from the frozen fields of Lapland and Siberia to the banks of the Indus and the Rhine, sent forth their savage legions at his call. Never before, in the history of the world, never since, except perhaps in the expeditions of Timour and Tchengis-khan, was so vast and wild a host gathered beneath the standard of a single leader. Five hundred thousand fighting men were assembled in central Europe, ready to precipitate themselves

upon Gaul. The catalogue of Sidonius might rival that of Homer.* You shall have the enumeration as given by M. Thierry :—

"History has left for us the melancholy catalogue of this army, whose masses encumbered not only the banks of the Danube, but all the surrounding country. Never since the days of Xerxes had Europe witnessed such a gathering of nations, known or unknown : the battle-roll included five hundred thousand warriors. Asia figured there in the person of her most hideous and ferocious representatives : the black Hun and the Acatzir, armed with their long quivers ; the Alan, with his ponderous lance and cuirass of plaited horn ; the Neuri and the Bellonoti ; the Geloni, painted and tattooed, whose weapon was a scythe, and who wore, by way of an ornament, a cloak composed of human skin. From the Sarmatian plains had come the Bastarnæ in their waggons, half Slaves, half Asiatics in blood, resembling the Germans in their equipment for war, the Scythians in their manners, and being polygamists like the Huns. Germany had furnished her most distant tribes, dwellers in the extreme west and north : the Ruge from the banks of the Oder and the Vistula ; the Scyrian and Turcilingian, who came from the banks of the Niemen and the Dwina, names then obscure, but soon to acquire a terrible significance : they marched to battle with the round Scandinavian buckler and short sword. There, too, were to be seen the Heruli, swift in the chase and invincible in fight, the terror of their kindred Germans, who exterminated them at last. Neither

* "Subito commota tumultu
Barbaries totas in te transfuderat Arctos,
Gallia ! pugnacem Rugum comitante Gelono,
Gepida trux sequitur ; Scyrum Burgundio cogit,
Chunus, Bellonotus, Neurus, Bastarna, Toringus,
Bructerus, ulvosa quem vel Nicer abluit unda,
Prorumpit Francus ; cecidit cito secta bipenni
Hercynia in lintres, et Rhenum texuit alno."
SIDON. APOLL., *Pan. Aviti*, 318—325.

the Ostrogoth nor the Lombard were disobedient to the call; they were there, with their ponderous infantry so dreaded by Rome."*

This heterogeneous host, extending its front from Basle to the mouth of the Rhine, passed the river in two great divisions, one towards its source, and the other near its embouchure, in somewhat the same manner as did the allied armies in 1814. Attila directed them upon Orleans, which, standing at the highest part of the curve formed by the great central river of France, the Loire, was then, as afterwards, the most important strategic position in Gaul. It was guarded by some Alans in the service of the Empire, but their king, Sangiban, influenced either by terror or the hope of reward, promised to deliver up the keys of the gates upon the arrival of the Huns. Meantime Aëtius had been organizing the means of resistance. Uncertainty as to the intentions of Attila had delayed him long behind the Alps in a position which he dared not quit so long as the capital was itself menaced. But as soon as the project of the Hun became patent, he descended into Southern Gaul, bringing with him all the barbarian auxiliaries he could collect, and hastened to form a junction with Theodoric, the Visigoth king. But here he was arrested by an unexpected obstacle. The Visigoths would not move. An autograph letter from Valentinian; promises, entreaties, and representations of the common danger, were of no avail. "The Romans have got us both into this scrape," was the answer; "let them get us out of it." It was then seen how powerful is the agency of personal influence even upon the destiny of nations. What the emperor, Aëtius, and the imminent peril of the civilized world had been unable to accomplish, was effected by the persuasions of a single man.† Among

* Histoire d'Attila, vol. i. p. 141.

† "Orbis, Avite, salus, cui non nova gloria nunc est.
Quod rogat Aëtius voluisti, et non nocet hostis. [Vis!

the pleasant hills of Auvergne, dwelt a Romanized Celtic senator, Mecilius Avitus, who had served the Empire with signal success in peace and war, and who had contrived to create an atmosphere of almost Augustan refinement and grace around him in that distant region, where he led a happier life than when, in after-days, he so unwisely wore the imperial purple. The account of this little Auvergnat society, half Roman, half Gaulish, in the fifth century, as given by its leader's son-in-law Sidonius, is one of the most pleasant episodes of the history of the time.* But upon it we must not dwell. Avitus, who was the object of intense admiration at the Gothic court, urged upon the king that it would be consistent neither with his honour nor his safety, to permit the Hun to establish himself upon the left bank of the Rhine. The old king yielded to the representations of his friend, and gave the word to arm. His warriors received the command with rapture. At the sound of the Gothic horn, so dreaded in the day of battle, the "legions of the leather cuirass" crowded to the Roman eagles, and Sidonius, in an enthusiastic outburst, compares the object of his panegyric to the "Arabian phœnix," at whose call, "all the fowls of the air gather from the utmost regions of heaven, while the welkin is too narrow for their rushing wings."† And indeed the name and glory of Aëtius had attracted to take their part in this grand struggle, all the semi-civilized world of barbarism. The distant Bretons of the Armorican peninsula answered to the call. There too were to be found the Ripuarian Franks and the Salian Franks, the latter under Meroveus, the *protégé* of Rome, eager to meet their unworthy brethren, who had taken

Vis? prodest; inclusa tenes tot millia nutu,
Et populis Geticis sola est tua gratia limes,
Infensi semper nobis pacem tibi præstant."
SIDON. APOLL., *Pan. Aviti*, v. 339—343.

* Sidon. Apoll., Epist. ii. 2.

† *Ibid.* Pan. Aviti v. 354.

service with Attila; the Burgundians burning to avenge their wrongs; the Helvetian mountaineers, who had followed Aëtius from the Alps. Sangiban too, with his Alans, despite his treacherous designs, dared not be absent. The various Teutonic bands who had acquired any settlement beyond the Rhine,—Sueves, Letes, and independent Franks,—Sarmatæ from the neighbourhood of the modern town of Autun, even Saxon wanderers from the mouths of the Seine and Loire;*—all swelled the ranks of the great army which went forth to roll back Asiatic barbarism from the West.† What in the mean time was the fate of Orleans? Anianus (St. Agnan), its bishop, like so many other Christian bishops in those troublous times, was the only real representative of authority left to direct and console the trembling inhabitants. He had sought Aëtius in the south, and, with the pathetic language of a Hebrew prophet, assured him that if he and his army did not arrive within six weeks, that is to say, before the 14th June, at the gates of the city, Orleans would have become the prey of the barbarian, and a place of desolation. Aëtius gave the required promise; but we have seen the difficulties which retarded its performance. The citizens of Orleans struggled bravely with their swarming assailants, and gazed anxiously from their walls towards the south; but no Roman spears were seen flashing in the bright sunshine of Tourraine. Deferred hope sickened into despair, and capitulation was in the thoughts and on the lips of all. The eventful day arrived, and the pious Anianus himself prayed fervently on his knees, and exhorted his flock to pray for the promised succour. Three times was the messenger sent, like sister Anne, to the sum-

* "Quin et Aremoricus piratam Saxona tractus
Sperabat, cui pelle salum sulcare Britannum
Ludus, et assuto glaucum mare findere lembo."
SIDON. APOLL., *Pan. Aviti*, 368—370.

† Jornandes, de Reb. Get. c. 36.

mit of the hightest watch-tower, to see if he could discern the tokens of deliverance. Twice he returned without intelligence. The third time, just as the battering-rams of Attila were shaking down the gates, a cloud of dust in the horizon proclaimed that the avengers were at hand. A charge of cavalry swept up to the walls, and behind were seen the imperial eagles, mingled with the standards of the Goths, and the Roman legions in their serried ranks. Such is the dramatic account which the worthy Gregory of Tours,* bent upon glorifying his fellow-saint Agnan, has handed down of this ever-memorable day,—a day long celebrated by a religious solemnity in the Church of Rome, where, says M. Thierry, "the names of Agnan, Aëtius, and the Gothic Thorismond, were mingled in its prayers." There seems, however, little doubt but that Orleans had already capitulated when the relieving army arrived, and that a terrible struggle took place in its streets. The Huns recklessly engaged in plundering, and, entangled among the houses, were taken at a disadvantage; and, after suffering severely, fell back to a position where their multitudinous cavalry might act with more effect. The spot chosen for deciding the great question whether Asia or Europe, barbarism or civilization, should rule the world, was in the plains of Champagne, between Châlons-sur-Marne and Méry-sur-Seine. The final struggle was inaugurated by a tremendous conflict at the latter place, between the Gepidæ, composing the rear-guard of the Huns, and the Merovingian Franks, who marched in the Roman van. The Frankish battleaxe forced back the sword and spear. The combat continued the whole night; but when morning rose, 1,500 corses attested the fury of the combatants. Next day was fought that great fight of Châlons—"one of the four decisive battles of history," the very thought of which overpowered the imagination of contemporaries, and beggared all their resources

A.D. 451.

* Gregory of Tours, ii. 7.

of language. "Bellum," says Jornandes, in his rugged Latin, "atrox, multiplex, immane, pertinax, cui simile nulla usquam narrat Antiquitas, ubi talia gesta referuntur, ut nihil est quod in vitâ suâ conspicere potuisset egregius, qui hujus miraculi privaretur aspectu."* A few miles on the Strasburg side of Châlons are the remains of an ancient camp, at a place called in the guide-books "Fanum Minervæ." Around these stretches a wide plain, through which runs the river Vêsle, here a narrow stream, probably the "rivulus humili ripâ prolabens" of Jornandes. A dull foreboding oppressed the Huns. Attila exhibited extreme agitation all the night, and like the Babylonian monarch, summoned the diviners to read his fate. There, beneath the royal tent, pitched in the extreme west of Europe, Calmuck sorcerers from the steppes of Asia, with their horrid rites, asked the question of destiny, on the answer to which the fate of both worlds hung. "Attila shall be defeated, but the leader of the enemy shall fall," was the response. The death of Aëtius, the companion of his own youth, the only man, as he well knew, capable of holding together the Roman empire, seemed to the king of the Huns well worth the loss of a battle. He determined to engage, but previously encouraged his people with a speech, which Jornandes reports in full. Like the speeches of Livy, it is of very doubtful authenticity; but it breathes the ferocious spirit of "the Scourge of God." He tells his warriors, "To assault, is half the way to victory: these hordes of degenerate Romans, with their unworthy allies, will not, cannot withstand the fury of your eyes in the shock of battle. Fortune would never have made the Huns victorious over so many nations, did she not mean to reserve for them the raptures of this strife," an expression immortalized by a modern poet.† At three o'clock in the afternoon, Attila came forth from his intrenched camp in order of battle. On his left were the Ostrogoths,

* Jornandes, ut sup. † Byron, Ode to Napoleon.

under Valamir, the best-trained soldiers in his army. His right was occupied by Ardaric, with the remains of the Gepidæ, and the other tribes who had followed his standard to the war. He himself took up his position in the centre with his Huns, for greater security, says Jornandes, but most probably with the intention of bursting through the opposing line with his irresistible cavalry, and thus cutting the Roman army in two. Aëtius assumed the command of his own left, where stood the legionaries; on the right he placed the Visigoths, confronting their Ostrogoth brethren; his centre was composed of Franks and Burgundians, and the Alani, of whose loyalty he had reason to doubt. Probably foreseeing the impetuous charge of Attila, he strengthened his own wings, that he might overlap and surround him by driving back the wings of the enemy. Something of the kind occurred. Attila and his unconquered horsemen carried all before them; but on the Roman right the Visigoths, after a terrible hand-to-hand struggle, in which the brave old Theodoric fell, drove back the Ostrogoths from the field, and, transported by the excitement of success, fell furiously upon the left centre of the victorious Huns. On the right, Aëtius, who had more than held his ground against Ardaric, closed in upon them with the legionaries. The battle was now over, and Attila, fighting his way through the *mêlée*, with the greatest difficulty regained his camp. An attempt was made to carry it by assault; but dense flights of arrows from behind the wooden waggons, directed with the unerring aim of the hunters of the desert, kept the enemy at bay. Such was the great battle of Châlons, which saved Gaul and the civilization of Europe. It might have been yet more decisive, had not the Roman army immediately broken up. Aëtius is said to have feared the Goths, and to have counselled their new leader, Thorismond, son of the slain Theodoric, to anticipate his brother's claims, and secure the

kingdom by an immediate return to his capital, Toulouse. It is much more probable that the selfishness of the Gothic prince himself suggested the scheme, and disarranged the plans of Aëtius. However, whether prompted by Roman advice or in pursuance of his own policy, it is certain that Thorismond instantly withdrew. Attila, fearing a stratagem, made no attempt to assail Aëtius, but, says Jornandes, when a long silence followed the departure of the foe, he deemed himself master of the field, and, with the joys of victory, resumed the dreams of ambition. His first thought was of vengeance. Rome, and the man who had saved Rome, were its objects. Falling back beyond the Rhine, he devoted his energy to amassing a fresh force as formidable as that which fought at Châlons. "Was Attila really vanquished?" asks M. Thierry. "Certainly not," he replies; he was not, at any rate, in the opinion of his countrymen, to whom waggons well filled with booty, and long trains of captives, were always sufficient assurance of success. To secure these, the king of the Huns led his army back by Troyes, Cologne, and Thuringia, devastating the lands in defiance, and burning the Roman cities. To every traveller who makes the tour of the Rhine, an abiding memorial of his progress is presented, where one of the most famous churches of Cologne keeps watch over the consecrated bones of St. Ursula and her eleven thousand virgins. The following spring he passed the Julian Alps, and reappeared, terrible as ever, on the Italian plains. Meantime, "the last of the Romans" was suffering the wrong which a debauched and despotic court always inflicts sooner or later upon a great man. The parasites of Valentinian accused Aëtius of betraying the Empire after the defeat of the Huns, and of employing Attila, the friend of his youth, as a bugbear to terrify the emperor. "Thus only," they said, "could he find the means of keeping all real power in his own hands." There can be no doubt that Aëtius was ambitious; but it is most unlikely that he was a

traitor. His designs probably extended no further than the marriage of his son with Eudoxia, the daughter of the emperor, a design which the emperor himself had encouraged. But be this as it may, his unpopularity at court enfeebled his power in the field. Attila was already on the summit of the Julian Alps. The court of Ravenna was paralyzed with alarm, but Aëtius was without anything that could be called an army of defence. Remembering his brave comrades of Gaul, Franks, Burgundians, and Visigoths, Aëtius wished to place the emperor in safety among them before engaging in this last desperate struggle for Italy. The proposal called forth a storm of indignation and obloquy. Aëtius could do nothing but fall back beyond the line of the Po, transport Valentinian from Ravenna to Rome, and await the arrival of the succours which he had requested from the brave emperor of the East. Aquileia was at this time the most important city of Northern Italy. It stood in a lovely plain, "girt with green vineyards, and blooming with flowers as for a fête."* The Huns swept over this beautiful spot, as the conflagration over the prairie, leaving nothing behind them but blackness and ashes, and sat down before the city. The gigantic earthen mounds which encircled their encampment may still be seen in ruins near Udine. The place was surrounded by a river and defended by a strong wall, flanked with lofty towers. Against these defences the Hunnish hordes dashed up like the ocean, and recoiled like its spray. As at Orleans, the barbarian arms and tactics were of little avail against stone walls. Squadrons of charging horse, and clouds of unerring arrows, could not carry ditches and ramparts. They attempted other means without more success. In vain the Huns swarmed day after day to assault and escalade; day after day they were driven back. Three months passed away, and the hot

* Herodian, Hist. viii., quoted by Thierry.

season was at hand. The barbarians lost heart; even Attila himself, in profound dejection, meditated a retreat, when one day, while contemplating as usual the wall which had foiled so many efforts, he observed some storks flying away with their little ones from a ruined tower. He instantly felt that the place was doomed, and impressed his army with his own conviction. "Behold," said he, "these birds, with prophetic knowledge of the future, are quitting a city about to perish, and desert at the approach of peril the towers so soon to fall."* The Huns had ever regarded their monarch with superstitious awe. In the present case they fully believed the prophecy, and the prophecy, like many others, wrought its own fulfilment. They multiplied their military engines and means of assault, they attacked the place with redoubled fury, and at last surmounted the wall.

Aquileia was a heap of ruins, but from its ashes sprung a phœnix, which by the splendour of its plumes long fixed upon itself the gaze of men. Flying from Aquileia and all the neighbouring towns in the Venetian district, as it was even then called, the terrified inhabitants sought refuge from the horsemen of the Hun in an archipelago of inaccessible islands, surrounded and secured by the northern waters of the Adriatic. This lonely spot, for long ages the haunt of the seabird and the solitary fisherman, thus became the cradle of the long glories of republican Venice,—"a city," writes her enthusiastic admirer, "which was to be set like a golden clasp on the girdle of the earth, to write her history on the white scrolls of the sea-surges, and to word it in their thunder, and to gather and give forth, in world-wide pulsation, the glory of the East and of the West from the burning heart of her fortitude and splendour."† Summer was now at hand, and the Italian climate had done its usual work upon the frames of the northern barbarians. Sickness

* Jornandes, de Reb. Get. c. 42.

† Stones of Venice, vol. ii. p. 10.

and death were rife in the camp of the Huns, the strongest suffered from debility. After the sack of the northern cities, all in the barbarian camp, save the unconquered spirit of the king himself, were anxious to postpone fresh operations until another year. Attila resolved to force his way over the Apennines, give battle to Aëtius before the walls of Rome, and pass in vengeful triumph up the Sacred Way, which had seen the imperial people trample for so many centuries upon the necks of barbaric kings. But it was no longer now the Rome which refused to speak of peace even while the enemy was at her gates. She deemed it best to anticipate his arrival, and sent an embassy to deprecate the victor's wrath, the principal place in which was occupied by the venerable pontiff Leo IV., canonized by the Church of Rome with the name of "Great." Leo was a man of rare ability, eloquence, firmness, and knowledge of the times. In the curious taste of the day, he was styled the Cicero of Catholic rhetoric, the Homer of Theology, the Aristotle of the Philosophy of the Faith.* To his personal reputation he added the prestige of his position as chief officer of the Church, a prestige not without its effect even upon the barbarian mind. No better envoy could have been chosen, and it is not surprising that the success of the mission should have been elevated by mediæval ecclesiastical writers into a miraculous confirmation of the authority of the supreme head of the Church. But many considerations weighed upon the mind of Attila. His army was reduced in numbers, enfeebled and disorganized by disease; his generals discontented, and unwilling to advance. Somewhat of the ancient awe still clung around the name of Rome; the terror of ten centuries of dominion could not pass away in a single hour, and the fate of the Gothic spoiler Alaric had been regarded with a feeling of superstitious dread throughout all the barbarian world. When, therefore, the ambassadors met

* Vita S. Leon. Magni, apud Bell., quoted by Thierry, p. 219.

the king of the Huns in the neighbourhood of Mantua, he condescended to listen to their overtures, and on the 6th July, consented to quit Italy, in consideration of an annual tribute. But his compliance was only in accordance with the maxim "*reculer pour mieux sauter.*" Never abandoning his design upon Rome, even at the hour of his departure he provided himself with a pretext for return. "Send," said he, "my affianced bride Honoria, with her dowry, into the land of the Huns, or I will come with spring to seek her at the head of an army."* With this menace upon his lips, he departed for his wooden city on the banks of the Danube. But he did not return by the way which he came, for in the present condition of his army he was most unwilling to encounter the legions of the Eastern empire, as he debouched from the defiles of the Julian Alps. He retired, therefore, by the passes of the Alps of Noricum, and his soldiers, notwithstanding the treaty of peace, plundered the town of Augsburg or Augusta, which lay upon his way. Whilst crossing the little river Lech, a tributary of the Danube, an incident occurred which excited the superstitious foreboding of his followers. A female in the garb of a sorceress or Druidess of Gaul, rushed forward in his path, and seizing his bridle-rein, exclaimed, "Back, Attila, back!" Whatever may have been the purport of the warning, whether it was meant to apprise the king of a coming danger, or to deprecate the abandonment of Italy, the termination of the great conqueror's career which followed so closely upon the words, attached to them in after-times a significance which they would not otherwise have acquired. The winter was passed in the exchange of haughty recriminations and defiance with the Eastern court. Despite his avowed intention of visiting Rome for his bride, he declared to Marcian that, if the tribute promised by Theodosius were not paid, he would come in person to Constanti-

A.D. 452.

* Jornandes, de Reb. Get. c. 42.

nople to exact it. Marcian was not the man to be awed even by the king of the Huns. He retorted threat for threat, strengthened his defences, and levied troops. But an event was at hand which was to defer the doom of the imperial city for exactly a thousand years. During the winter, says Jornandes, Attila determined, in addition to his innumerable wives ("innumerabiles uxores") to take to himself another, a maiden of exceeding beauty, named Ildico. Tradition varies as to her origin. She is on the one hand represented as a Bactrian princess, on the other as daughter of a Burgundian or Frankish king. The name certainly has a Teutonic sound, and seems still to survive in Hildegarde; nor is the fact unimportant in reference to what followed. Attila had apparently pursued the old Homeric practice, he laid waste the native city and slaughtered the relatives of his future bride before admitting her to his seraglio. His nuptials were celebrated with barbaric pomp, but on the following morning he was found dead in his bed, weltering in gore. Ildico was seated by his side apparently overwhelmed with grief. The account given by the Huns, and perpetuated in their national traditions, is, that he had ever been subject to bleeding at the nose, and that the hæmorrhage having broken out while he was reclining on his back, he had been stifled in his own blood. German tradition asserts that the free daughter of the forest avenged the murder of her kinsmen and her own shame by the poniard. The Latins added, that she was aided by an emissary of Aëtius, who had been surreptitiously introduced into the household of the Hun. It is idle now to discuss these different tales. The fact remains, Attila was no more; and by his death was broken up that great confederation of barbarism, held together by his commanding genius and iron will, which at one time equalled in dimensions, and threatened soon to surpass in power, the empire of Rome.

The history of the successors of Attila may be found in

the interesting work of M. Thierry. It is impossible to follow it out here. Immediately after his death, the Germans refused to submit to the divided rule of his sons. The army of Attila split up into two great camps; on the one side were the Gepidæ and Ostrogoths, with the majority of the Teutonic nations; on the other the Huns, the Alans, the Sarmatians or Slavonians, and the few Germans who still owned allegiance to the memory of Attila. A vast plain between the Drave and the Danube was selected to decide this vital struggle, known as the battle of Netâd, which, though less famous in history, may perhaps claim equal importance with that of Châlons, as an arbiter of the destinies of civilization. Jornandes revels in his picture of the strife, and becomes almost as savage as the combatants while he describes their furious passions, their weapons, and their wounds. Fortune at first seemed to favour the Huns; but German steadfastness prevailed; Goths and Gepidæ scattered the less-disciplined bands of Asia; and Ardaric, the king of the latter tribe for the time, established himself in the royal residence of Attila, and assumed the leading position in the barbarian world. Gibbon succinctly describes the fate of Attila's immediate descendants. It is not necessary to add anything to that description, for the Huns proper disappear as a great power after the disastrous dissolution of their confederation.

The battle of Netâd, I say, broke the power of the Huns and put an end to their ephemeral empire. Under the sons and successors of Attila they either retired into Asia, or gradually wore out their strength in unavailing struggles against the Ostrogoth domination and in combinations with other barbarian tribes to plunder the possessions of the Byzantine Cæsars. But the races of Turanian stock were still destined to reappear more than once upon the stage of European politics, and to play there no undistinguished parts. The empire of Attila was soon partially revived by

the kinsmen of his Huns, and acquired an extension, not indeed quite equal to the dominion of that "Tamer of nations," yet one not undeserving of comparison with it, in respect of its power, its military exploits, and the influence which it exerted upon both branches of its Roman rival. The Avars, as they were incorrectly called, by appearing at the critical moment, enabled the Lombards to annihilate their hereditary enemies the Gepidæ, and thus accomplish their long-cherished project of invading Italy.* And to the Greek the Avars proved a still more formidable foe. They broke down the defences of the Danube, and permanently established themselves between that river and the Save; they conquered, and after conquest, organized the Slavic tribes against the common enemy; they almost unceasingly ravaged the northern provinces up to the very walls of the capital, and imposed upon the Byzantine court a tribute which the strongest and wisest of its sovereigns were only too glad to pay. They carried their audacity further still. Allied with the Persian, the ancient rival and enemy of Rome, they appeared upon the European bank of the Bosphorus, while the troops of Chosroes occupied the Asiatic side, and nearly inflicted upon the wealthy and magnificent Constantinople what Rome had suffered from the Goths of Alaric and the pirate hordes of the Vandal king.

The first appearance of the Avars in Europe was accompanied by some singular circumstances, which, as they seem to have escaped the notice of Gibbon, it may be as well to describe. Amid the ceaseless flux and reflux of populations in Central Asia, and the numberless revolutions among the tribes of Turanian origin, which it would be an abuse of the term to call political, the Avars appear to have acquired a strong and widely-spread dominion over their neighbours. Conspicuous among these were the Ouars, also called Khouni (Χοῦνοι), a word which at once identifies them with the

* See Lecture VI.

Huns, who received this appellation from the Greek historians. They seem to have submitted unwillingly enough to their masters, until the advent of a stronger race involved both in a common captivity. Far away, in the very centre of Asia, at the foot of the Altaic range, two thousand miles distant from the Caspian and Chinese seas, the Bay of Bengal, and the Siberian shore, dwelt the great Khan of the Turks, "king of seven nations, and lord of the seven climates of the world." This potentate reduced the Avars beneath his sway; but some unknown cause appears to have rendered him suspicious of their allegiance. A visit of investigation became necessary: it was paid with consequences the most frightful. Three hundred thousand human beings fell victims to his wrath. For the space of four days' journey the earth was covered with decaying corpses.* The blow was fatal to the Avars; but it gave freedom to their former dependents, the Ouar Khouni. Watching for an opportunity, they at last found one in the engagements or neglect of their new lords, the Turks; and gathering together their wives and their children, their flocks and their herds, they turned their waggons towards the setting sun. This immense exodus comprised upwards of two hundred thousand persons. The terror which inspired their flight rendered them resistless in onset; for the avenging Turk was behind their track. They overturned everything before them, even the Hunnic tribes of kindred origin, who had long hovered on the north-east frontiers of the Empire, and, driving out or enslaving the inhabitants, established themselves in the wide plains which stretch between the Volga and the Don. In that age of imperfect information they were naturally enough confounded with the greatest and most formidable tribe of the Turanian stock known to the nations of the West. The report that the Avars had broken

* Theophylact, quoted Histoire d'Attila et ses Successeurs, vol. i. p. 396.

loose from Asia, and were coming in irresistible force to overrun Europe, spread itself all along both banks of the Danube, and penetrated to the Byzantine court. With true barbaric cunning, the Ouar Khouni availed themselves of the mistake, and by calling themselves "Avars," largely increased the terrors of their name, and their chances of conquest. Their success was very great; so great, indeed, that they soon felt themselves in a position to demand lands and a pension from the emperor Justinian. Justinian was approaching his dotage; he had, at any rate, lost that administrative energy which rendered the early part of his reign worthy of the palmiest days of Rome. He hesitated as to his reply. Motives of policy finally prevailed: he accepted the offer of the Ouar Khouni to act against the other barbarian enemies of the Empire, and promised them an annual tribute, disguised under the name of pay, but deferred the question as to territorial settlement. For the next five years this policy was successful; for the Avars employed them in exterminating the Hunnic tribes north and east of the Black Sea, and taking possession of their lands. But in the mean time, the Turks had discovered the disappearance of the Ouar Khouni. Their anger was intense. "They are not birds to fly through the air," said the great Khan; "they are not fish to hide in the depths of the sea: they are on the earth, and I will have them." His wrath was naturally enough directed towards the ruler who had received his rebellious vassals, slaves of his slaves, and rewarded them with territory and gold. An embassy was dispatched to Constantinople; and, for the first time in history, the Turks made their portentous appearance in the capital of the Eastern empire. Nearly a thousand years were to elapse before they laid her walls in ruins, and reared the standard of a faith of which she as yet had never heard, upon the fanes where worshipped the ancient Mistress of the world. But even at this distant period a

A.D. 562—567.

prescient alarm appears to have possessed the imagination of the Christians. The strange Asiatics were regarded with mixed curiosity and terror by the luxurious sons of Constantinople. Justinian was disabused of his delusion, and suffered himself to be reproached for his credulity. He dismissed the ambassadors with lavish presents and studied politeness; nor did he fail to express his deep disgust at the cheat which had been practised upon him. Still, however, he hesitated to break openly with the Avars; for the Avars, aided by the terror which their name inspired, and by their supposed connection with the Empire, had by this time acquired a fatal hold upon the banks of the Danube, and founded a dominion which in power, if not in extent, rivalled the territory won for a moment by the "Scourge of God." In this limited space we cannot pursue its history; but in its relations with the rival empire of civilization, it obtained all the advantages which strength, cunning, audacity, and unbounded perfidy were likely to assert over imbecility and decay. Even in the time of Justinian, the Greek empire occupied the humiliating position of a tributary. But Justin II., the successor of Justinian, was an arrogant pedant, and, consequently, a fool. He was incapable of appreciating the dangers of his situation; or, if he ever became alive to them, he imagined they might be combated by rhetorical common-places and magniloquent boasts about the Roman name. On the other hand, Baian, the Avar khan, was a man of no small genius for policy and war, and distinguished in no common degree for the special qualities which brought success to the barbarian arms,—indomitable valour in the field, and unscrupulous perfidy in his political relations. His reign, which lasted for twenty years, was the most brilliant period of the Avar annals. During this period the Avar empire was firmly established on both banks of the Danube; the valleys of the Balkan, or, as it was then called, the Hæmus, were traversed

A.D. 582—602.

with entire impunity by the Avar horsemen; and the Save was spanned by a bridge, without opposition from the Roman governor, who had been deceived by the gross and public perjury of Baian. In the presence of the Roman officials and his own magnates, the khan swore by all the Gods of his nation, and by Him whom the Christians worshipped, that he had no sinister intention, no military object, in the construction of this bridge. It was still incomplete when he passed a large army across, and declared war. The result was, that the important triangular territory between the Drave and the Save, with the pointed edge towards Constantinople, was permanently occupied; the large Roman city of Sirmium,—so dear to the Greek emperor's heart, and so important to his interests that he declared he would rather spare a daughter to the barbarian,—after a bloody and protracted siege, was carried by assault, its churches pillaged, and the inhabitants put to the sword; the Roman armies were continually and ignominiously defeated, and the Empire itself subjected to an increased tribute, which, being simultaneously hard pressed by other foes, it was fain to pay.

The Avars were terrible to the Byzantine Greeks, but they were still more terrible to their own barbarian neighbours, the Slavic tribes, who had by this time occupied, in immense numbers, the centre and south-east of Europe. These unfortunate creatures, of apparently an imperfect, or, at any rate, imperfectly-cultivated intelligence, endured such frightful tyranny from their Avar conquerors, that their very name has passed into a synonyme for the most degraded servitude. In peace, their houses, their flocks and herds, and fields, their wives and daughters, were at the disposal of their brutal masters, while they were themselves driven away into the depths of forests and morasses, yet all the while compelled to keep up the payment of a burdensome tribute. In war their position was more pitiable still. Driven to the field in herds before the Avar warriors, they

were placed, though imperfectly armed, in the front of the battle, and compelled to meet the shock of the imperial legionary, with his iron-clad body and sweeping sword. If they recoiled, as they necessarily must, they were goaded onward by the pike of their masters and allies in the rear; and thus acquired, from the complacent facetiousness of contemporary writers, the epithet of "Bifurci," or "pricked on both sides." A day of terrible retribution was at hand, when these degraded beings, restored to a sense of manhood, and subjected to military organization by a Frank adventurer, wiped out the stain of these long years of ignominy in the blood of their former lords. This is, however, to anticipate.

With the Franks themselves the Avars soon came into contact; for their insatiable passion for plunder conducted them over almost the whole of central Europe. But here their success was not so satisfactory. Their first encounter with the sons of the warriors whose battleaxes had hewed down the hordes of Attila upon the plains of Châlons, terminated in a rude repulse upon the banks of the Elbe, whither Sigebert, grandson of Clovis, had led the battalions of his people. A second encounter was not quite so fortunate for the Franks: they were forced to give way before their enemies; and the ecclesiastical writers ascribe the result to the sorcery and magic of the *Huns*. As the Ouar Khouni had called themselves Avars in the East, in accordance with a popular error, they availed themselves of a similar error in the West, and assumed the dreaded name of the followers of Attila, who ravaged Orleans and fought at Châlons. Phantom warriors, it seems, dealt fatal blows upon the Christians from the midst of clouds and darkness and storm; so firm a hold has the belief in this form of supernatural agency upon the human imagination, and so far was primitive Christianity from eradicating it. Notwithstanding, however, "their incantations and their

A.D. 561.

mighty magic," they finally and completely succumbed to the sword of Charlemagne, under circumstances which shall be related in their proper place.

In the mean time we must recur to the fortunes of Baian. The close of his life, like that of several other great conquerors, was a bitter contrast to its commencement. The Empire at last found a man and a soldier. At the head of their levies, Priscus entirely outmanœuvred the Avars, drove Baian beyond the Danube, and defeated him in five successive general actions. Nor did he pause here. Once more the eagles entered Pannonia, the scene of so many victories, and for the last time in history crossed the Theiss. It was nearly all over with the Avars. Another year of such warfare, and they would have been compelled to re-seek the deserts of Asia. But it was not given to a vicious and emasculate society, like that of Constantinople, to achieve deliverance for itself or for the world. In one of its ceaseless and turbulent revolutions, the wise and brave emperor Maurice was slain. He was succeded by a common centurion, one Phocas, a man profoundly vicious, ignorant, sensual, cowardly, and cruel, the very worst man, in short, to deal with the critical circumstances of the time, whom the time produced. He speedily undid all that the wisdom of Maurice and the military skill of Priscus had effected. From a base desire to court popularity with the legionaries, the Roman armies were recalled from their glorious but toilsome service, and the Avars were saved to work still greater mischief than heretofore. They had, however, smarted too severely in the last campaign to attempt anything against Constantinople, at any rate for a time, and accordingly turned their steps towards the west, whither they had learnt the way by occasionally sending contingents to the Lombard legions. Upon the West, therefore, the new khan determined to descend; but this time against his former friends the Lombards, who were

now permanently established in Italy. The small patrimony of Ghisulph, a Lombard duke, lay directly in his path; its capital town, Forum Julii, near to Aquileia, was at that time occupied by his widow, Romhilda, supported by a competent garrison. The defence was resolute, and might have been successful; but female perfidy was the cause of its ruin. The licentious Lombard was smitten with the person of the gallant and splendidly-arrayed Avar, as he rode round the fortifications. Determined to satisfy her passion, she entered into a clandestine engagement to open the gates at night, upon condition of becoming his wife. In the sense which an oriental and a barbarian would attach to the word, he fulfilled his promise; but he fired and plundered the city, slaughtered the fighting men, and dragged off into slavery the remaining population. Romhilda herself he subjected to a cruel and degrading insult, and then placed her among his menial servants. The foray had so far been successful, and the Avar khan set out for his Pannonian home in true freebooting style, laden with plunder, and accompanied by an immense train of captives, whom he hoped either to employ as slaves or exchange for a valuable ransom. Their numbers were found to render rapid progress impossible; and delay had become perilous. Halting at a place called Campus Sacer, "the sacred plain," the khan deliberated as to the expediency of butchering the whole multitude. While the deliberation was in progress, the three sons of the late duke made their escape, under circumstances which read like a romance. The youngest, a mere child, being unable to sit his horse, was recaptured; but as his captor was leading his bridle-rein, the boy brained him by an unexpected blow, and galloped off into the forest, where he soon rejoined his brothers. This event put an end to all hesitation respecting the captives; they were instantly slain upon the spot, and the "Campus Sacer" became accursed for an effusion of innocent blood, which was

regarded as terrible even in those terrible times. A more evil fate awaited Romhilda. Subjected to a punishment so atrociously cruel that it cannot be recounted in a civilized age, she was left in her death-agonies upon the ground, to declare to Italy the vengeance of the khan and his abhorrence of her treachery. I have dwelt for a moment upon this matter, though it possesses no political importance or significance, because it seems to bring before us, better than any mere record of battles and sieges, the manners of that strange, wild time, in which modern society had its birth, but which remains so utterly unrealized, even in the imaginations of educated men.*

The next exploit of the Avar was one which proved him capable of a treason more vile than that which he had so outrageously avenged. It was nothing else than an attempt, in violation of the universal practice of all civilized nations, to carry off the Greek emperor, at a solemn conference, which the Avar had himself proposed. The emperor was advancing to the appointed spot, near Selymbria, to the north of the great wall of defence which the Byzantines, with Chinese perspicacity, had been at immense pains to construct. He had brought with him an enormous quantity of baggage; all the necessary and ornamental trappings of a large suite; the whole apparatus of a Roman theatre, with its scenery and actors; the cars, the horses, the drivers, and, we may presume, the factious partisans of the Hippodrome. He rode himself at the head of the long procession, clad in his purple mantle, and wearing his golden crown. Thousands of curious spectators accompanied the *cortége*, and all was in the inextricable confusion common upon such occasions. On a sudden the Avar cavalry were seen advancing from the horizon with the speed of the wind. All doubt as to their intentions was instantly removed by a furious charge. The

* The whole story is to be found in Paulus Diaconus de Gestis Langobardorum, iv. 38.

emperor, warned at the last moment by a peasant, was compelled to ride recklessly for his life, dropping his imperial mantle upon the ground, and concealing his golden crown in his sleeve. The Avars slaughtered the unresisting crowd, and made a magnificent harvest of the gold and jewels, the embroidered vestments, the chariots and horses, and the theatrical properties which fell into their hands. It was, after all, however, what our neighbours expressively call a "*coup manqué.*" Baian called for his royal prisoner; they brought him the abandoned purple. The Avar, too cunning to compromise himself, yet unwilling to lose that for which he had ventured so much, ordered his cavalry to advance without him, and try the effect of a surprise upon Constantinople. The untiring horsemen galloped unchallenged through the defences of the long wall up to the very entrance of the capital; but they found the gates closed, the sentinels placed, and the archers upon the rampart. Heraclius had arrived before them. After inflicting some damage upon the splendid churches in the suburbs, they returned to the khan, who instantly disavowed the whole affair, and, with profuse expressions of regret at the insubordination of his subjects, resumed his diplomatic intercourse with the emperor. What was it possible to do with such a man, and such a race? The most suitable and obvious treatment, humiliation by the sword, was impossible. There had lately occurred in the Greek empire one of those singular social crises, which, just as they cannot previously be anticipated, so, after their occurrence, are seldom rightly accounted for or understood. Nothing could be worse than the universal corruption, debasement, and national debility which had followed upon the usurpation of Phocas. The court and government were in the last stage of imbecility and sensualism; the populace had become unmanageable; the treasury was empty; the army nowhere to be found. Only two of the common soldiers, who had marched with the

traitor Phocas to dethrone his master, could be discovered on the roll-call. Heraclius had certainly been able to extinguish the tyrant; but to remedy the disorders of his weak and reckless administration seemed impossible. The Empire was without defenders and without funds; and while the Avars were as usual sweeping over all its possessions in Europe, its old hereditary enemy the Persian was gaining triumph after triumph, and adding territory to territory in the East. Under Chosroes, the famous Nushirvan of oriental legend, the Persian bands yearly overran Syria, Palestine, and Asia Minor; so audacious were their inroads, that they established themselves permanently in sight of the metropolis; and just as Destiny was preparing for the final ruin of the Empire by the birth of the Arabian prophet, for the first time in men's memories, as the presage of a more terrible future, the tents of Asiatic marauders were seen, where now the cypresses of Scutari look down upon the glittering pinnacles of Stamboul.

As sometimes happens, the very magnitude of the evil appears to have produced its remedy. The Persians had sacked Jerusalem, sacrilegiously despoiled the church reared by the pious care of the empress Helena, and carried away the true Cross into the interior of their country. Scarcely had the sacred lance and sponge been saved from the wreck, and secretly conveyed to Constantinople. Among its excitable population, in an age when religion was inextricably mixed up with its external symbols, and their importance, for that reason, immensely magnified, the effect of these events was something quite beyond our power to imagine; perhaps we may rather say, *would* have been beyond our power to imagine, had we not been acquainted with the scenes enacted by Greek and Latin Christians at the Holy Sepulchre in Easter week. The loss of the Cross seemed to the men of that generation what the loss of the sacred volume, were such a loss possible, would have seemed to the Puritans of

the Commonwealth, or the fanatics of the Covenant. The intelligence was received with tears and groans, mingled with fury. Then ensued a crisis of religious excitement and exaltation which roused the whole Byzantine population from the depths of their debasement, and kindled a martial enthusiasm which anticipated by centuries the first crusade. The scene of the plateau of Clermont was rehearsed in the Hippodrome of Constantinople. "*Deus vult*," "*Deus vult*," re-echoed in those Sybarite halls, so long the abode of luxury and pleasure; the people recovered their almost departed manhood; and the emperor, shaking off the sloth into which he seems to have fallen from despair, placed himself at the head of the movement, and conducted it with a degree of genius and military skill unsurpassed by Narses or Belisarius, or, indeed, by any sovereign or leader of the Lower Empire. In a series of campaigns planned and carried out among the Armenian mountains, and inspired, perhaps, by the traditions of the immortal retreat of the Ten Thousand, the Romans threw themselves upon the rear of the Persians, and, assailing the base of their operations, thoroughly disorganized their armies, and snatched from them the fruits of their former successes. Chosroes was terribly defeated near the Euphrates, and perished very shortly after. To Heraclius belonged the glory of the last triumph of the Roman arms won on Asiatic ground, ere they were finally expelled beyond the seas by the irresistible onslaught of Islam.

But at present the Avars are our theme: we are concerned with the fortunes of the Empire only so far as these are mixed up with them; and we have paused upon this episode simply because it brought the khan and his people once more to the walls of Constantinople, and nearly enabled them to anticipate, by nine hundred years, the great catastrophe in which their kinsmen of Turanian stock, the Mongol Turks, played so conspicuous a part. During the

progress of the Persian war, Chosroes came to an understanding with the khan, and purchased his assistance. The pillage of Constantinople was the proffered price. It was arranged that the Avars were to assail the city upon the European side, while Schaharbarz, the Persian general, appeared upon the opposite bank of the Bosphorus. The Persians possessed no fleet, but their allies were to supply the want with all the boats which they could collect upon the Danube and the other rivers that discharge themselves into the Black Sea. The early part of June was fixed for the rendezvous; but the khan was determined to win, and spent so much time in extraordinary preparations, and the construction of military engines, that it was not until the 27th of July that he reached the suburbs, though he had passed the long wall nearly a month before. This enabled the citizens to organize a regular defence, in which they were materially assisted by the arrival of one of the most distinguished divisions of the Asiatic army, despatched by Heraclius to save his throne and capital. The besieged, however, did not neglect the chances of diplomacy, and sent an envoy to ascertain the intentions of the khan, who, it must be remembered, was still their excellent friend and ally. There was no longer either equivocation or disguise. This time, at any rate, the Avar expressed himself with perfect plainness and simplicity. "Go," said he to the envoy who, in the name of the Roman magistrates, had forbidden his further advance, "go, and perish along with your people; but be sure to tell them this: if they do not give up to me everything they possess, I will raze their city to the ground, and carry off every single soul among its inhabitants into slavery."

A.D. 626.

The assault began on the 31st of July, and was continued, without ceasing, for five days. In vain the barbarian brought up all his engines, swept the parapets with the unerring Mongol bow, and rolled his twelve huge timber towers close

up to the wall of the beleaguered city. The Greeks encountered the attack with at least equal resolution and ingenuity. A tall mast, the invention of a mariner, was erected on the rampart, and a species of crane constructed, from which depended, by pulleys, a skiff (*navigiolum*), or basket, containing several volunteers, who discharged burning pitch from their perilous elevation upon the inflammable towers. The siege made no progress, and the Avar became impatient. He determined upon a night-attack, in conjunction with the Persians, whom he had, however, not yet been able to bring across the Bosporus, so formidable and vigilant was the Roman fleet. A large body of Slave auxiliaries were, as usual, destined for the forlorn-hope. While the Avars assailed the fortifications on the land side, the Slaves were to penetrate into the Golden Horn in the rude vessels which they had brought from the Danube. But the besieged were on the alert: they discovered the plan of the attack and the signal for its commencement. Prematurely kindling a fire upon the summit of a lofty tower, they decoyed the Avars into a naval ambush, in which they were inclosed like thunnies in a net. Then the ponderous war-galleys, with brazen beaks and triple banks of oars, dashing among the wretched logboats of the assailants, and, favoured by the obscurity of the night, smashed, overturned, and sunk them on every side. The crews were precipitated into the water; the Golden Horn became a veritable "chamber of death," and the doomed barbarians were knocked on the head, speared, and hewn in pieces, or thrust beneath the waves, until the galleys of the victors could scarcely make their way through the blood-stained and encumbered water. The khan perceived that his chance was over; and after committing most malignant devastation in the beautiful suburb of the Fig-trees—Sykæ, now Galata—sulkily withdrew his army, never more to be gathered together for a great enterprise.

The subsequent history of the Avars need not detain us long. No great man supplied the place of Baian, and the whole people rapidly sunk into that feeble and debased condition which is naturally the result of luxury engrafted upon gross barbarism. We hear of their accumulating the most delicate and costly products of Eastern looms, the most exquisite workmanship of Byzantine goldsmiths, and remaining unsatisfied still; but "man and steel, the soldier and his sword," were scarcely found among a race who, by their aid, had actually subdued a large portion of the known world. The most formidable blow to their declining power proceeded from a source which they but little anticipated. The intercourse of their warriors, during the intervals of warfare, with the women of their Slavic vassals, resulted in the birth of a race named by the Chroniclers Vendes, who, like the Parthenii of Spartan story, participated too strongly in the fiery blood of their fathers to submit with indifference to that degrading serfdom which they inherited on the maternal side. It was with these half-castes that the first resistance to Avar domination originated. But almost simultaneously the whole Slavic race were, as we have said, roused from the apathy of ages, and induced to assert their manhood, by a Frank adventurer, or "merchant" in the phraseology of the time, who had been in the habit of conveying his wares into the country on the backs of long trains of pack-horses and mules. This Frank, whose name was Samo, was undoubtedly one of the most extraordinary men of his time: brave, enterprising, and skilful, he seems to have breathed the Teutonic spirit of self-reliance and hardihood into this down-trodden race; at any rate, he taught them to defeat their masters, and establish a very considerable dominion for themselves. We cannot dwell upon his fortunes or theirs, for we shall come upon them again in the history of the Franks, with whom Samo, himself a Frank, but now also, unhappily, an apostate, very speedily came into collision.

We are, however, perhaps concerned to know that the Slaves, under the leadership of Samo, not only drove back the Avars to the east and north, but also entered into relations with the Greek empire, which relations resulted in the still further circumscription of the Avar territory, and in the establishment of two dynasties of their own race, whose names still occupy a place upon the map of Europe. On the northern slopes of the Carpathians, between the Oder and the Vistula, were settled a mixed race of Vendes and Slovenes, or Slavonians, who called themselves Khorwates, Khrobates, or Croats, that is to say, "mountaineers." To these rude warriors, the emperor Heraclius, influenced by an easily intelligible policy, offered part of the lands evacuated by the Avars. The Croats, or rather a branch of them, eagerly accepted the offer, and were located in the ancient Dalmatia, among the Istrian mountains, and on the coast of the Adriatic Gulf. The islands of the gulf and the principal maritime cities were retained under Roman, that is to say, Byzantine dominion. From this dates the first existence of Austrian Croatia. Servia had a similar origin; for Servia was peopled by another influx of Slavonians, calling themselves *Srp*, or, according to Greek interpretation, "Serbes." Heraclius, in pursuance of the same policy, invited their approach, upon the departure of the Avars, and settled them in Upper Mœsia, Dardania, and Dacia; thus assigning to them a function which they may even yet discharge, that of an outlying, independent outpost against a preponderating northern power. These new nationalities entirely shut out the Avars from all interference in the affairs of Southern and Western Europe, and bucklered the Empire against their blows. At the same time they quarrelled with their own kinsmen, the Bulgarians, who had constituted no small portion of their strength, and forced them into the arms of their great enemy the Greek emperor, who welcomed their advances with warmth, and

A.D. 630.

pensioned them in the usual way. The Avars, thus cut off from their natural and hereditary method of keeping alive their military spirit, and maintaining their power—brigandage and foreign war,—were thrown entirely upon their internal resources. But without settled government, without agricultural industry, or the material means of prosperity, such social activity as they retained, was almost of necessity directed to evil ends. Bloodshed and internal dissension, combined with luxury in that grossly sensual form which barbarism adopts, worked out, by the inevitable law of falling empires, its irretrievable ruin. "From the year 630 A.D.," writes M. Thierry, "the Avar people are no longer mentioned in the annals of the East; the successors of Attila no longer figure beside the successors of Constantine. It required new wars in the West to bring upon the stage of history the khan and his people."* In these wars they were finally swept off from the roll of European nations. We shall hereafter have to recount how, behind their barbaric Hrings, or Rings, they awaited, and succumbed to the sword of Pepin and Charlemagne.

A.D. 796.

So ended the second great effort of the Turanian races to establish an empire on European soil. But the Hunnic stock has never been entirely extirpated by German steel. In the ninth century, the Hunugars, or Maygars, a tribe of Avar blood, once more conquered their way into Europe, and founded a dynasty, which has played no mean part in the annals of Christendom. This is still a living link to bind us to that history which perhaps may have seemed, while it was recounted, a thing entirely of the past. "But," as says M. A. Thierry, "history shows us, since the middle of the fourth century, in the central and lower valleys of the Danube, an uninterrupted succession of Hunnish tribes, perpetuating the traditions of Attila. Is this permanent

* Attila et ses Successeurs, vol. ii. p. 125.

settlement of the Huns in the eastern countries of Europe, and in the very heart of Europe itself, nothing more than a question purely archæological and speculative? The late war will furnish for us the answer. The valleys of the Volga and the Don, the slopes of the Oural, the steppes of the Caspian and the Black Sea, still contain the races which came in the fourth century with Balamir, in the fifth with Attila, in the sixth with the Avars, in the ninth with the Hungarians, to occupy the centre of Europe, and to menace more especially Greece. It is now fifteen centuries since the battle-cry, 'To the City of the Cæsars!' was first heard in those wild lands; and since that day it has never ceased to re-echo there. Will the nations whom the Finno-Huns have planted in Europe, and who have become assimilated to ourselves in manners and culture, remain for ever strangers to that movement which agitates their brethren? It is the secret of the future; but we may assert with confidence, that sooner or later they are destined to resolve the problem which preoccupies the world."*

It may, at some other time, be our duty to recount the fortunes of the sons of Arpad, their establishment in Hungary, their conversion by St. Stephen; their gradual incorporation into the great society of European commonwealths; their sufferings from Tatar invasion; their rescue from renewed barbarism by the princes of the house of Anjou; the glorious reigns of John Huniades and Matthias Corvinus; their ill-omened connection with the house of Austria. But these are the events of times long distant from our present goal.

* Attila et ses Successeurs, Preface.

LECTURE V.

ITALY—THE FALL OF THE CÆSARS—ARBOGASTES—ALARIC—RICIMER—ORESTES—AUGUSTULUS.

"Italia! Italia! O tu cui diè la sorte
Dono infelice di bellezza, ond' hai
Funesta dote d' infiniti guai,
Che 'n fronte scritti per gran doglia porte."

FILICAJA.

"*Jack Cade.*—Go to, tell the king from me, I am content he shall reign; but I'll be protector over him."—*King Henry VI.*, Part II. act iv. sc. 2.

SYNOPSIS.—Italy the link between the old world and the new.—Arbogastes, the Frank, its first barbarian master.—His defeat and destruction by Theodosius, emperor of the East.—Division of the Empire into East and West.—Rise of Alaric.—Struggle between him and Stilicho.—Stilicho murdered.—Alaric sacks Rome; dies.—Departure of the Goths for Gaul and Spain.—Genseric, king of the Vandals, invited to Italy by the empress Eudoxia; sacks Rome; carries off spoils and captives to Africa.—The last quarter of the fifth century the crisis in the great drama of the Fall of the Empire.—The actors in it.—Ricimer dethrones Avitus; substitutes Majorian; has him assassinated.—Interregnum.—Zeno, the Eastern emperor, obtains the throne for Anthemius.—Ricimer supports Olybrius, the Vandal candidate; slays Anthemius, and sacks Rome.—Ricimer and Olybrius die.—Gundobald, the Burgundian, master of the situation; appoints Glycerius.—Julius Nepos, nominee of the Greek court, dethrones Glycerius, and makes him a bishop.—He is himself dethroned, and driven into exile by Orestes.—Interregnum.—Romulus Augustulus, son of Orestes, made Cæsar by the soldiery.—Orestes refuses partition of lands to his army.—Odoacer promises it; defeats Orestes, and decapitates him; sends Augustulus, the last of the Cæsars, into honourable imprisonment; is made king of Italy.

ITALY may, in some sort, be regarded as the link between the old world and the new. There died out the ancient Empire; there, under the Ostrogoth and Lombard, arose

the earliest type of the existing European nations; there, in the duchies of the latter power, were developed the germs of the feudal system; there, too, the city first assumed its true social importance, and, with its own rise and growth, fostered the rise and growth of free civil institutions, commerce, and general intelligence; and there, in the complicated relations and clashing interests of the Mediæval Republics, originated, as Machiavelli believes, the great idea of a Balance of Power, which has been since matured into the doctrine of the European equilibrium. There, again, broke the dawn of revived learning, of letters, and of art, and, kindling into the light of a glorious day, wrought, first an intellectual, and then a moral revolution in the condition of Christendom; and there, finally, was the birthplace and the home of that marvellous power which, by a strange metempsychosis from material to moral dominion, succeeded to the sceptre of the Cæsars, and for thirteen centuries has exercised, for evil or for good, a more than Cæsarean empire over the minds of men. But, above all, it is more especially to Italy that we owe, according to the belief of her eloquent and profound historian, the first conception of that which is the fundamental truth of modern society. The Italian communities being the first to combine the interests of conquerors and conquered, were also the first to discern that men are not to be governed in the interests of any one class, but for the development of all their powers, moral as well as intellectual, and for the general happiness of the whole body. "From the moment," says Sismondi, "they formed their own governments, and formed them for the common good, they prospered: while every other nation suffered, they rose in intelligence as well as virtue. . . . . They rose from the practice to the theory of civil society, and showed, not only to their own country, but to future nations and ages, the object to which all human associations should tend, and the best means by which to

attain to it."* To the story of Italy, therefore,—of interest at all moments, of surpassing interest at the present moment,—we turn first.

A.D. 376.

The flight of the Visigoths before the overwhelming inroad of the Huns, and their settlement upon the southern bank of the Danube, commences, as we have already seen, that long series of events which terminated in the fall of the Roman empire, the extinction of the political life of the old world, and the first rude development of our modern nationalities. The prudence of Theodosius averted from the Eastern empire the peril which followed upon the rout of Adrianople; the capital was saved; and more than a thousand years elapsed before a barbarian banner floated over the palace of the Byzantine Cæsars. Very different was the fate of Italy. Her natural northern rampart of the Alps offered but a trifling obstacle to armies unencumbered by artillery or baggage, and accustomed from infancy to the hardships of savage life; and, the Alps once crossed, there was little in strength of strategic position, still less in the moral strength derived from national spirit, to arrest their onward progress. "Quisquamne reclusis," asks the last of Roman poets, "Alpibus alterius Latii fore credidit umbram?"† — "The passage of the Alps once opened, who believed that a shadow of Roman power would remain?" The first to avail themselves of this obvious weakness were the Alemanni, who formed, as it were, the point of the great Teutonic wedge, with whom old Ammianus had so many stout battles under Julian, and against whom the emperor Probus had constructed his wall of defence. Ascertaining from a countryman who had been, as was now usual, enlisted in the body-guard of Gratian, the Roman emperor, that a strong force was about to march out of Italy for the purpose of aiding Valens in

* Sismondi, Hist. Ital. Rep., Introduction.

† Claudian, de Bello Getico, v. 97.

the struggle with the Goths, which we have already described, they suddenly dashed across the Rhine into Roman Gaul.* The movement was premature, for the legions were not yet beyond recall, and Gratian had also obtained the aid of the Franks. A bloody battle was fought at Argentaria, in Alsace; the king of the Alemanni fell upon the field, and the invaders were for this time repulsed. Theodosius in the East was shortly afterwards no less successful against the Ostrogoths, or a part of the Ostrogoth tribe, who, after their displacement by the Huns, had been roaming like freebooters through Central Europe, and at last reappeared on the frontier. The imperial troops ensnared and slaughtered large numbers on the Lower Danube, and, in accordance with a policy which was becoming common, Theodosius settled the remainder in the fertile provinces of Phrygia and Lydia. Meanwhile a revolt was organized in Britain, which cost the emperor of the West his throne. One Maximus, a Spaniard by birth, occupying a high official position in that province, forced on step by step into insurrection, by a soldiery and people of whom he appears to have been the idol, raised the standard of revolt in the island, and passed over into Gaul, attended by a large multitude,—130,000 men and 70,000 women, says Zosimus, the Byzantine historian.† This colony, settling in the Armorican peninsula, gave to it the name of Brittany, which it has since retained. The rebel forces were soon victorious over the two emperors who had agreed to share the Roman throne. Gratian they slew at Lyons; Valentinian they speedily expelled from Italy. Success probably induced ambitious projects, which included the whole Empire, East as well as West. They had now, however, to deal with a far more formidable adversary—the politic and wise Theodosius. Theodosius adopted the cause of his brother em-

A.D. 383.

* Lect. IV. p. 186. † Lib. iv. c. 36.

peror, influenced, it is said, by a romantic passion for Galla, the sister of the exile. Grave historians dispute the truth of what they call an unworthy motive. We may venture to be less severe, and, with Gibbon, "rejoice to find in the revolutions of the world some traces of the mild and tender sentiments of domestic life." At first the Greek temporized with the enemy; when he saw his opportunity he declared war. The reader is so fatigued and confused by the names of great battles, which, he is told, and truly enough, decided for the time the fate of the civilized world, that the combat of Scissia, a town of Pannonia, where Theodosius rescued the empire of the West, and restored it to Valentinian, will probably pass away at once from his memory. Yet it was a stern and bloody struggle, in which the bold barbarians who fought on either side gave ample indication of the stuff of which the men of modern Europe were to be made.

A.D. 388.

Valentinian regained his throne; but in one brief year the imperial puppet was once more thrust aside by the strong hand of a stranger. Arbogastes, master-general of the armies in Gaul, had greatly distinguished himself in the late war. This ambitious soldier, presuming upon the weakness of his master's character, had gradually filled all the public offices with creatures of his own, and was evidently paving the way to an open assertion of that supreme authority which he already practically possessed. Valentinian, in a sudden *accès* of resolution, summoned the traitor to Trèves, and deprived him of his command. In three days, as might have been expected, Valentinian was found dead in his bed, and Arbogastes was undisputed ruler of the Roman empire. Arbogastes, therefore, was the first of those Italian mayors of the palace,—masters of their nominal masters, through whose agency was wrought the transition from the Empire to the new nationalities of Europe. But the times were not yet ripe for undisguised

A.D. 391.

barbarian rule. It better suited his purpose to thrust the imperial purple upon Eugenius, a wretched rhetorician, who had been his secretary, than to assume it himself. Once more Theodosius, urged on by his own indignation and the tears of his colleague's widow, appears in the character of a deliverer. Arbogastes allowed him to descend from the Alps, and then assailed him with the solid infantry of Gaul and Germany on the level ground. It was well nigh all over with the Eastern troops, who were compelled to fly, or take refuge on some inaccessible heights in their rear. The roll of Roman emperors might have been spared some ignominious names, had not treachery interfered. Ecclesiastical historians ascribe the eventual success of Theodosius to the direct intervention of portents, marvellous as those which assured the triumph of Israel, on that eventful day when the sun stood still upon Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon. But the sudden defection of the Gallic legions from Arbogastes, and the accession of strength which they conferred upon the opposite side, is sufficient to account for the refluent tide of fortune, without resorting to the intervention of the miraculous. Eugenius was decapitated on the field; Arbogastes was completely, hopelessly defeated; and, after wandering as a hunted fugitive among the Alpine passes, anticipated the vengeance of his enemies by falling on his sword.

A.D. 392.

A.D. 394.

The eventful life of Theodosius approached its close. He made dispositions before his death for the famous division of the Empire among his sons. To Arcadius he left the throne of the East, Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, Thrace, Dacia, Macedonia, and Eastern Illyricum. Honorius he summoned to Milan, and there placed in his hands, Britain, the sovereignty of Italy, Spain, the two Gauls, Africa, Noricum, and Western Illyricum. At the same time he nominated the renowned Stilicho, a Vandal by

birth, general-in-chief of the legions in that division. He could have made no better selection. Stilicho, the ablest man of the age, had been the emperor's comrade in war, and most prudent adviser in peace. "Together," Claudian makes him say, "we have stained the Odrysian Hebrus with Gothic blood; together we have scattered in flight the horsemen of Sarmatia, and stretched our wearied limbs on Alpine snows, or traversed the frozen Danube in our car. Since, then, the will of Heaven calls me hence, do thou succeed to my imperial cares; do thou *alone* cherish these pledges of my love, and protect my twin children by the strength of thy arm."* Soon afterwards the great Theodosius died of dropsy, in his fiftieth year. If Stilicho ruled the West in his master's name, he deserved to do so; and it was well for the West that he did. The same thing cannot be said of Rufinus, the actual ruler of the East, a man consigned to perpetual infamy by Claudian, the last poet of imperial Rome. His ambition and rapacity knew no bounds. "As the ocean," says Claudian, "receives the Danube and the Nile, and yet exhibits no visible expansion to the eye, so Rufinus swallows the wealth of nations, and his appetite is insatiate still."† This man, disappointed in a design to wed his daughter to Arcadius, and jealous of the influence of Stilicho, who, ambitious as himself, claimed the guardianship of *both* emperors, is accused, by contemporary historians, of inviting the Huns into Europe, and the Goths into the Empire.

A.D. 395.

> "Tunc impius ille
> Proditor imperii, conjuratusque Getarum,
> Distulit instantes eluso principe pugnas,
> Hunnorum laturus opem, quos affore bello
> Nôrat, et invisis mox se conjungere castris."‡

The exact causes of the great Gothic war which followed are not easy to discover; nor, under such circumstances,

* Claudian, de III° Cons. Honorii, v. 147.
† In Rufinum, i. 183. ‡ *Ibid.* i. 318.

is it of much importance to inquire into their nature. What is of more importance to notice is that the name of Alaric, who had already served in the Roman armies, now first appears as an independent leader of those frightful inroads which eventually brought him as victor to the gates of Rome. He descended upon Greece by the world-famous pass of Thermopylæ. The only man who could have arrested his advance had been excluded from the scene of action by the mean jealousy of the Byzantines and the secret ambition of Rufinus. Claudian, in a fine burst of patriotic indignation, proclaims to the world how different would have been the results had his favourite hero been allowed to act :—

> "Prodita non tantas vidisset Græcia clades,
> Oppida semoto Pelopeia Marte vigerent,
> Starent Arcadiæ, starent Lacedæmonis arces;
> Non mare fumâsset geminum flagrante Corintho,
> Nec fera Cecropias traxissent vincula matres."*

But, as it was, Thermopylæ no longer maintained its traditional strength; the straits were carried without a blow, and the whole of northern Greece clean swept of treasure and population. Athens capitulated at once; Argos, Corinth, and Sparta followed the example, and suffered the wrong and ravage which have stamped infamy upon the Gothic name. The court of Byzantium, influenced by jealousy of Stilicho, who had appeared on the scene, and forced, after an action near Pholoë, in Arcadia, the Goths to retire across the Gulf of Corinth, made a strange return for these insults. They appointed Alaric master-general of Eastern Illyricum; and his Gothic kinsmen, recognizing the rising star of his destiny, and exulting in the prospect of the plunder of the world under

* Claudian, in Rufinum, ii. 188; and cf. De Laud. Stilich. i. The 29th and 30th chapters of the "Decline and Fall" contain an elaborate and eloquent account of these wars; and the compression which I have been obliged to employ is, therefore, less to be regretted.

the banners of such a leader, proclaimed him "King of the Visigoths," and all the tribes of kindred name. Like Attila, at a later period, he hovered for a while between the two empires, and then gathered up his strength to strike the weakest. After a considerable time, spent in vigorous preparation on both sides, we find him and Stilicho again opposed to each other, and each at the head of a mighty host, upon the plains of Pollentia, about twenty-five miles from Turin. A Vandal and Goth were about to contend for the empire of Rome and the Western world. The dawn of Easter Sunday saw the Goths engaged in their devotions. The omen was not so happy for them as for the Scots at Bannockburn. Stilicho fell upon their intrenchments with equal skill and impetuosity, slew large numbers, and made himself master of their camp. It contained the spoils of Greece, the master-pieces of Athenian genius, and the wonders of wealth and art which had decked the chambers of Corinthian courtesans; but it also contained a prize more precious still — the spouse of Alaric, laden with the gems and gold in which it had been her ambitious dream to ascend the Capitol as Empress of the West. "Never," says Claudian, "did we so deeply plunge our steel into the Scythian throat; never with such a slaughter tame the pride of the Tanais or the Danube. O," he exclaims,

A.D. 403.

> "Celebranda mihi cunctis Pollentia sæclis,
> O meritum nomen, felicibus apta triumphis,
> Virtutis fatale solum! memorabile bustum
> Barbariæ."*

The traditions of the great fight were also perpetuated by a contemporary poet. "Mirabere seris," writes the Christian Prudentius—

> "Posteritas sæclis inhumata cadavera latè
> Quæ Pollentinos texerunt ossibus agros." †

The check was a rude one; but Alaric had sworn to find

* Claud. de Bello Getico, v. 635. † Prudent. in Symm. ii.

in Italy a kingdom or a grave; and while his enemies were enjoying the honours and more substantial advantages of victory, he made a dash at Rome in their rear. With any other opponent than Stilicho he might have succeeded; but Stilicho, ever vigilant, had thrown, before his arrival, a formidable force into the city. Baffled again, the fierce barbarian accepted a compulsory truce; but, while returning from Italy under its conditions, he faithlessly fell upon Verona, then, as now, the key of the neighbouring country. The untiring Stilicho, however, was on the watch, and attacked the besiegers front and flank. On this occasion Alaric only escaped by the swiftness of his horse, and Rome was respited for a season.

Her next peril was from Radagasius, at the head of the left wing of the vast barbarian migration, which, as we have seen, fled west and south before the Huns. The fate which befell Radagasius before the walls of Florence we have already recorded,* and shall not now recur to it. The fortunes of Alaric are the more natural theme for those whose object it is to trace the action of barbarism upon the gradually declining state of the Empire. For a short time we lose sight of him; but he reappears in the somewhat extraordinary character of general-in-chief of the Roman armies in Illyricum, this time by appointment of Stilicho, who was probably actuated by jealousy of the Eastern empire, or, perhaps, by a renewal of his own designs upon it. As might have been expected, the Goth availed himself of his position to carry out the one fixed idea of his mind, and, declining to operate against the Greeks, took up a position from which he menaced Italy. The Roman court now occupied Ravenna, which had become the capital of Italy, owing to its situation, which was considered more secure than that of either Milan or Rome. The nature of this security we learn

A.D. 405.

* Lecture IV. p. 190.

from the Byzantine Procopius, who saw the place in the campaigns of Belisarius, whose secretary he was. It was derived from its position amid the Adriatic lagunes and the mudbanks of the Po. "Ravenna lies," says the Greek, "in a plain sloping down to the Ionian Gulf, which is some two furlongs distant. It can neither be assailed by land nor sea. Shallows and shoals prevent the access of any vessels. On the other side the flooding of the Po, and the numerous marshes caused by its waters, encircle the town in all directions, and render it inaccessible to infantry. A most marvellous phenomenon occurs here: every day the sea rushes in, for the space of a day's journey to a well-girt man, and becomes navigable far inland. In the evening it rolls back. Vessels come up with the flow, and return with the ebb, and this takes place all along the coast to Aquileia. This phenomenon occurs at the full moon."* Such a spot, however suitable for a fortification, was detestable as a residence. Its imperfect drainage and fetid canals, coupled to the entire absence of vegetation and fresh water, rendered it an abomination to the strangers compelled to sojourn within its walls. Sidonius, who saw it on his way to Rome, vents his wrath and disgust in an epigrammatic tirade, which, as it gives a lively idea of a place henceforward so famous in Italian history, we may be permitted to transcribe. "What a town, or, rather, what a morass, you live in," he writes to his friend Candidianus; "where your ears are pierced by the mosquitoes of the Po, and deafened by the croaking of your fellow-citizens, the frogs. With you all the laws of nature are undergoing a perpetual inversion: your walls topple over, your water stands fast; your towers float, your ships settle down; your sick people go about, your doctors lie in bed; your baths are cold, and your dwellings blaze; the living are half dead with thirst, the dead swim about in the water; the housebreakers keep

* Procopius, de Bello Gothico, i. 1.

awake, the authorities go to sleep; the clergy are usurers, the Syrian usurers"—who, as Jerome tells us, were famed for their avarice—"chant the offices of the Church; the soldiers traffic, and the tradesmen fight; the old men play at ball, and the young men at dice; the eunuchs devote themselves to arms, and the barbarian auxiliaries to letters."* In this strange spot an idea of resistance was entertained by the Senate, who were suddenly convoked. It was the last deliberation of that venerable body, who had survived the fields of Cannæ and Philippi, the long tyranny of the Cæsars, and the strange vicissitudes of a thousand years. But Stilicho, the only man in the country competent to pronounce an opinion, knew too well the weakness of Italy, and would not recommend further opposition in a regular campaign. In accordance with his advice, the king of the Goths was bought off by the payment of 4,000 pounds of gold. Alaric turned his back for the moment upon Rome; but his departure proved fatal to the great man who alone was capable of resisting his progress. The enemies of Stilicho had long endeavoured to undermine his power; they now represented his relations with Alaric as cowardice or treason. The emperor was weak, or wicked enough, to lend himself to their designs, and Ravenna witnessed a judicial assassination, which forms one of the deepest degradations ever inflicted upon the Roman name. The hero of so many victorious fights, decoyed from the altar of sanctuary by the perfidy of Count Heraclian, bowed his head beneath the axe of the executioner. Rome had now lost both her sword and shield, and stood defenceless before the enemy. Alaric was not the man to let slip his opportunity. As the subsidy had not yet been paid, he availed himself of the excuse to appear again in Italy. His countrymen in the service of the Empire, discerning the signs of the times, threw off their allegiance to Rome, and joined the banners which promised

A.D. 408.

* Sidonius Apoll. Epist. i. 8.

renown and rapine to the whole Gothic race. Aquileia and Cremona threw open their gates; Ravenna was too remote from the line of march to necessitate a siege; the passes of the Apennines were undefended; and Alaric found himself, almost without striking a blow, before the walls of the capital of the world. It contained at this time a population of about 120,000 souls, without supplies of food or adequate means of defence. The Goths made no attempt to storm the ramparts; they sat quietly down, and inclosed the wretched citizens in a "cordon," through which nothing could force its way. The sufferings of the besieged were intense. Thousands died daily from starvation or disease. Under these circumstances there remained but one course—immediate submission; and the Senate soon forgot the resolute bearing which it had assumed in the presence of Stilicho. It could not, however, forego its magniloquent language; and the address of the envoys who came to propose terms to Alaric, described, in swelling words, the dignity of the imperial city, and the thousands of fighting men who still crowded her streets. "The thicker the hay," replied the Goth, with a barbarian laugh, "the easier it is mown." He then proceeded to declare his terms:—"All your gold; all your silver; the best of the precious furniture within your walls; all your slaves of barbarian birth." "What then would you leave us?" exclaimed the dismayed ambassadors. "Your lives," was the stern reply. Eventually the victor was induced to withdraw, by the payment of a less ruinous, but still most costly ransom. Five thousand pounds of gold; 30,000 pounds of silver; 4,000 robes of silk; 3,000 pieces of fine scarlet cloth; 3,000 pounds, weight of pepper, were, according to Zosimus, the market price of the Mistress of the world. But, in addition to this, 40,000 liberated slaves joined the host which marched beneath the standard of the Gothic king, and, in the succeeding year, swelled its numbers to 100,000 men.

A.D. 408.

It has ever been considered a problem most difficult to solve, why Alaric, with this overwhelming force at his command, did not at once make himself master of Italy, and ascend the throne of the Cæsars. Perhaps the lingering prestige which still hung round the city of a thousand victories, or a superstitious reverence for the relics of saints and apostles, and the dignity of the Church within its walls, asserted an indefinable influence over his mind; perhaps strategic or political considerations, at which we have no means of guessing, stayed his hand; perhaps, from his very first negotiations with Stilicho, he had never aimed at a higher position than that of titular sovereign prin ce, in subordination to the Empire. The truth of these, or of any other suppositions, cannot now be tested. Certain it is that he contented himself with demanding from the ministers of Honorius the office of master-general of the Italian provinces, subsidies for his army, and an independent command in Dalmatia, Venetia, and Noricum. "Quem Deus vult perdere, prius dementat." Never was the adage more truly illustrated than in this case. The ministers of Honorius refused to listen to conditions from the insolent barbarian who had dared to treat on equal terms with the Majesty of Rome; but Alaric had learned by experience the path to victory, and soon showed that he had not forgotten it. His first act was to seize upon Ostia, at the mouth of the Tiber, a position which enabled him to cut off the supplies of the capital. The terrors of the former famine had not yet passed from men's minds. The Romans could not endure their repetition; and they attempted to deprecate the wrath of the conqueror by deposing Honorius and electing Attalus, prefect of the city, to the imperial purple. The expedient was for a moment successful; but Alaric soon found that the tool to whose elevation he had consented, would not serve the purpose for which he was designed. He therefore publicly degraded him from the purple, on the

plains of Rimini, in sight of his whole host. Still he offered peace. The infatuated courtiers who governed the emperor, induced their master to declare, in an insane proclamation, that the guilt of Alaric precluded him for ever from the honour of an alliance with the Empire. Then Alaric once more turned his face towards Rome; but, this time, with a stern and vindictive purpose in his heart. It was in vain that the nobles attempted to organize a defence. The fears of the population and the treachery of the slaves, many of whom were connected by birth with the barbarians outside the walls, disclosed an easy path to victory. At midnight the Salarian gate was flung open to the Goths. According to Roman tradition, Porsenna, Brennus, and Hannibal, at the head of hosts as mighty, had recoiled, baffled, and beaten from those inviolate walls. But now, as ever, it was shown that the bulwark of a state is to be found, at such a crisis, not in ramparts reared by artificial skill, but in the spirit of its sons. No Horatius kept the bridge, "as in the brave days of old;" no Camillus scornfully kicked the beam of the balance wherein his country's honour was on the point of being bartered for her safety; no Scipio arose to redeem her in the last extremity of her peril. The old heroic race was gone. The barbarian army poured into the gates, but no man struck a single blow for Rome. In the dead of night the Gothic trumpet rang unanswered in her streets, and awakened the terrified inhabitants to a scene of outrage and despair never as yet witnessed within her walls; but, alas! too often to be repeated. The Queen of the World, whose foot had so long been on the neck of the nations, was exposed for five days and nights to the vengeful fury, the cupidity and lust, of the wild bands who had left their frozen fields and forests for the license of this hour. Some regard for religion and for mercy was shown by the Gothic king; for Alaric was a Christian. He exhorted his followers to spare the lives of the unresisting, and to respect the shrines

A.D. 410.

of the holy apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, as inviolable sanctuaries. But we, who have read of the sacks of Magdeburg and Badajos by the soldiery of professedly-civilized and Christian powers, may well understand how little effect such injunctions could have had upon the excited passions of German and Scythian brigands. Rome contained the spoils of the world. They were quickly transferred to the baggage-train of the victors. Gold and jewels; vestments of silk; precious fabrics of Eastern looms; exquisite statues, coveted for the value of the metal they contained; the massive plate of patrician houses; the costly vases which had ornamented the boudoirs of imperial ladies, were seen defiling, day after day, high piled in Gothic waggons, through streets covered with corses of the slain. The effects of this terrible shock to civilization were felt far and wide. Fugitives thronged the shores of Egypt and Syria. St. Jerome tells us, that every day men and women, who had passed their lives in patrician luxury, arrived at his hermitage in Bethlehem, begging their daily bread. The news of the dreadful event made his tongue cleave to the roof of his mouth, and his pen drop from his hand. "For twenty years," he bitterly cries, "Roman blood has been flowing every day between Constantinople and the Julian Alps. Scythia, Thrace, Macedonia, Dardania, Dacia, Thessalonica, Epirus, Achaia, Dalmatia, the two Pannonias,—all belong to the barbarians, who ravage, rend, and devour everything before them. How many noble matrons and maids have been the toys of their lust; how many bishops in chains, priests butchered, churches destroyed, altars turned into stables, relics profaned! Sorrow, mourning, and death are everywhere. The Roman world is crumbling into ruin!"

It is the disadvantage of a work brief as this must necessarily be, that we cannot dwell upon collateral matters,—upon the accidental disclosures of contemporary writers, which often give a truer picture of the times, than the best

narrative of its leading events. It is from the pages of Jerome that we might best derive such a delineation. Perhaps no one has thoroughly understood the age in its most remarkable aspects, who has not studied the writings of that extraordinary man, as he poured them forth from the depths of his fervid religious enthusiasm and bitter despair. There, better than elsewhere, we discern the great cardinal principles which separated the Christian life, in its social aspects, from the old pagan life of the world, and placed the two in irreconcilable opposition,—the equality, I mean, of the slave to his master as a spiritual being; the universal brotherhood of men; and the emancipation of woman from the debasement in which passion and the dominance of brute-force had placed her. Far more vividly than any other man, he felt and depicted the frightful havoc which had overwhelmed the world. "What is anywhere to be seen," he says, "but conflagration, ruin, captivity, despair, and death; the slaughter of friends and the faces of foes; one universal shipwreck of society, from which there is no escape save on the plank of penitence and faith." Nor was a less powerful impression produced upon the other great churchman of the age. The end of all things seemed at hand. "All the East," says Augustine; "all the remotest regions of the world, which had once revered the name and owned the sway of Rome, bewailed her fall;" he himself could not banish the thought from his mind as long as he lived. To the mind of churchmen, thoroughly imbued with the doctrine inherited from apostolic teaching, of the speedy coming of their Lord amid the clouds of heaven, how could it seem otherwise?

Whether from motives of policy or mercy, or because he panted for fresh fields of conquest, Alaric quitted Rome on the sixth day after he had entered it. With the native instinct of the barbarian, he still sought the South. The rich and lovely island of Sicily, long the granary of Rome,

tempted him to cross the narrow channel which separates it from the Italian coast. His followers were as eager as himself, but more superstitious, and more distrustful of the unknown perils of the sea. A tempest dispersed their rude galleys on the first attempt to cross; but while they hesitated before undertaking a second expedition, the great leader died. The wild grief of his warriors was exhibited in a most characteristic way. Beneath the walls of Consentia, rolled the waters of a small river, the Busentius or Busentinus. This they diverted from its course by the labour of the captives who accompanied the camp, and, excavating a large space in the original bed of the stream, placed in it the body of their king, amid a profusion of the most precious things which they had brought with them from the sack of Rome. They then turned back the river to its ancient course, and slew the slaves who had performed the work, that the hand of the spoiler might never desecrate the spot where slept the conqueror of Italy. Their precautions were successful. As of the great leader of the armies of Israel, so may it be said of the leader of the Goths—No man knows the tomb of Alaric. A.D. 410.

The Goths had been two years in Italy; they remained two more. Gibbon depicts them during this time as passing days of luxurious delight in the voluptuous villas of Tusculum and Campania, sheltered from the burning rays of noon beneath the leaves of spreading planes, and quaffing from goblets of gems and gold, large draughts of rich Falernian, which the fair hands of the trembling daughters of Roman senators proffered to their lips. The genius of Mr. Kingsley* has given a still more graphic portraiture of the strong, sensuous, yet not altogether ungraceful life, of these huge northern giants, beneath the soft perfumed air, and amid the beautiful women and intoxicating wines of the South. Residence in Italy may have engendered Roman sympathies,

* Hypatia.

or the restless spirit of the barbarian may have sought alliance with Rome as the readiest means of entering upon the track of other conquests. But from some motive or other, Ataulphus, Adolphus, or Astolphus, who had been chosen to succeed his brother Alaric, offered his sword to Honorius against the enemies of the Empire beyond the Alps. In the character of a Roman general he advanced into Southern Gaul, made himself master of the important cities of Narbonne, Toulouse, and Bordeaux, and founded the great kingdom of the Visigoths, which soon stretched over the fertile regions on both sides of the Pyrenees. Of its history, which connects itself with that of Gaul and Spain, we shall hereafter speak,* when we review the condition of Spain and Gaul. At present we are concerned with Italy; but it is no part of our purpose elaborately to trace the intriguing annals of the imperial court after the death of the dethroned Honorius. The events of the next quarter of a century are mainly connected with the history of the ephemeral empires of the Vandal and the Hun. The Huns first appear upon the scene, and, as they affected the establishment of an antagonist empire, rather than the subjugation of Rome itself, it has been found convenient to treat of the rise, progress, and dissolution of that attempt in a previous lecture.† Of the Vandal dynasty in Africa we shall hereafter speak. The thread of the Italian narrative is, however, easily recovered.

A.D. 412.

Honorius at last had closed his disgraceful life; the empress Placidia governed in the name of her son Valentinian, who was a minor. Such a court as was the Roman court, beneath the rule of a woman, was the fittest of all possible arenas for political intrigue. Two great generals or counts, Aëtius, of whom we have heard so much, and Boniface, disputed the first place in her favour,

A.D. 423.

* Lecture VIII. † Lecture IV.

and, as a natural consequence, the practical supremacy in the state. Boniface was administering the province of Africa. Aëtius persuaded the empress to recall him, and at the same time persuaded Boniface not to obey the recall. The latter he induced to believe that the order of the empress was the summons to instant death; to the empress herself he represented the refusal of the prefect as an overt act of treason to her authority. Boniface gazed around him in his extremity for assistance, and caught sight of the Vandals standing on the shores of Spain, and looking intently over the waters of the Mediterranean upon the fair unravaged land, which he still administered for Rome. In an evil hour he summoned them to his aid. That aid was too readily granted. The Vandals (whose history we shall recount in a future lecture) had by this time deposed their legitimate king, and were then obeying the behests of his brother Genseric, a more frightful barbarian than any who had as yet arisen among the foes of Rome. The circumstances of his eventful life, with the origin, growth, and character of Vandal domination in Africa, shall be hereafter detailed: we have now only to do with him and his people as the pillagers of Rome. Once more, as in the case of Attila, a woman, and a Roman princess, gave the invitation which brought shame and outrage to her country. Valentinian, in the course of his unbridled debauchery, had basely decoyed and then violated the wife of Petronius Maximus, a noble Roman. Maximus avenged himself by the dagger of a bravo, and assumed his master's place. We cannot pity the murderer of Aëtius; but it is equally impossible to sympathize with the usurper who forced Eudoxia, the wife of Valentinian, into wedlock with himself, the assassin of her husband. The example of Honoria and her affianced Hun appears to have worked upon the imagination of the empress. In her despair she called upon the terrible king of the Vandals to deliver her person

A.D. 428.

and avenge her wrongs. Within three months, Genseric was at the mouth of the Tiber. The Romans, in wild agitation, could devise no better means of defence than the slaughter of Maximus, their emperor, in a street tumult, while he was attempting to secure his own safety by flight. On the third day the enemy was at the gates. Leo still lived, and hoped, or perhaps believed, that the same venerable presence which had arrested the Hun, would exert a similar influence upon the mind of his ferocious confederate. Once more, at the head of a long procession of clergy, and arrayed in sacerdotal robes, he approached a mighty host of armed barbarians thirsting for blood and spoil. Ecclesiastical writers ascribe to him the glory of a second moral victory, a second deliverance of the metropolis of the Christian world from the sword of her enemies. The Vandal king received him with unexpected mildness, and promised mercy to the unresisting, and protection from fire to the principal buildings of the city. It is impossible to ascertain how far such promises were given in good faith.

A.D. 455.

A.D. 455. For fourteen days, from the 15th to the 29th June, the city was delivered over to rapine; and the Vandal and the Moor were found to be more cruel and insatiate plunderers than the Goth. Whatever had survived the former sack,—whatever the luxury of the Roman Patriciate, during the intervening forty-five years, had accumulated in reparation of their loss,—the treasures of the imperial palace, the gold and silver vessels employed in the churches, the statues of pagan divinities and men of Roman renown, the gilded roof of the temple of Capitolian Jove, the plate and ornaments of private individuals, were leisurely conveyed to the Vandal fleet and shipped off to Africa. To this systematic spoliation we must assign the loss of most of the best-known monuments of national history and of foreign conquest, contained in the imperial city. Amongst these were the precious records and

ornaments of the Capitol; the golden table, and the candlestick of seven branches, torn by Titus from the Temple of Jerusalem. They were pillaged simply for their value in the melting-pot. No grace of art, no charm of historic association, affected the rude minds of the African pirates, who, by a strange mockery of fortune, became masters of all the treasures which, during ten centuries of civilized life, had been accumulated in the marble palaces of the metropolis of the world. Capua, Nola, and all the provincial towns, not fortified sufficiently to stand a siege, shared the same fate. The memory of the abhorrence with which Europe regarded their deeds still lives in language; and most modern nations have fixed the stamp of eternal scorn to the Vandal name, by employing it to denote whatever is an outrage upon the sense of grace and beauty, which is the common inheritance of cultivated minds. The empress met the fate which, despite her wrongs, the reader will perhaps deem that she deserved. She went forth to meet her champion arrayed in imperial robes. The "age of chivalry" had not, indeed, "departed;" but, unhappily for her, it had not yet arrived. She was instantly stripped of her valuable wardrobe,—her gold, her jewels, her silken trains,—and was transported into Africa with her three daughters. They were accompanied by 60,000 captives. Theirs was indeed a melancholy lot — the δούλιον ἦμαρ — the day of slavery—the foreign land—the finger of scorn—the barbarian lord, described in Andromache's foreboding words, by the first and greatest of the masters of the human heart. There were not, however, wanting alleviations. Of the fortunes of those prisoners who fell into the hands of the Moorish allies of Genseric, nothing can be conjectured; but in Carthage itself Christian sympathy shone forth in pleasing colours, affording the only bright picture in the annals of those dark and terrible times. Deogratias, the worthy bishop of Carthage, spared neither of his substance

nor of his labour, to relieve the miserable captives; he even sold the consecrated vessels of the Church, and changed two basilicas into hospitals for the wounded and diseased. Private charity was almost equally active. Still the exiles of Carthage filled a world with "lamentation, and mourning, and woe;" and it is no marvel if the fond expectation of the faithful gathered strength, and men looked day by day for that awful Presence in the clouds of heaven, which should redeem the wrongs of the nations, and rescue the souls of God's elect.

But it was not the world—it was only Rome, that hastened to its fall. The last quarter of the fifth century saw this grand drama brought to a solemn close. No twenty-five years in human history exhibit incidents of such absorbing interest, more strange vicissitudes in the fortunes of great men and the government of states, so vast a catastrophe coming down upon the civilization of the world. They witnessed the actual fall of the Roman empire and the destruction of Italian independence; the final severance of the East and West, the establishment of foreign domination over the succession to the throne of the Cæsars; in a word, the extinction of the old-world order of things and the commencement of a new life for humanity. This immense revolution was mainly wrought out by three men, all of barbarian birth: Ricimer a Sueve, Odoacer a Rugian, and Theodoric an Ostrogoth. These men stand out from the epoch in giant proportions, but they do not stand alone. Around them revolve many figures of subordinate interest and importance, who were, however, largely instrumental in carrying out the great work. We see emperors of the West, the puppets or instruments of barbarian masters, permitted for a brief while to assume the fatal splendours of the Cæsarean purple—Avitus the Gaul, Majorianus the soldier, Anthemius the Greek, Olybrius his rival and successor, Glycerius an Italian count, Nepos the nominee of the

Byzantine court, and finally, Romulus Augustulus, the son and representative of Orestes the Pannonian, who closed the roll of Roman Cæsars. We see emperors of the East, the two Leos, and the Isaurian Zeno, ever intriguing from Byzantium to recover their hold on the Western empire, and for their personal interests selling Italy to the barbarian sword; statesmen, like Orestes, the Romanized secretary of the king of the Huns, Boëthius, Basilius, Symmachus, vainly endeavouring to maintain the dignity of the senatorial order and the political existence of Rome; churchmen exercising the most important influence in these troublous times, reconciling enemies, moderating the fury of barbarian conquerors, protecting their flocks from famine and sword, nurturing the Church with their labours and their substance, or sometimes with their blood, and founding, amid scenes of terrible peril, missionary churches in savage lands. Such were Sidonius in Auvergne, Epiphanius at Pavia, Severinus on the Danube. Again, we see soldiers of fortune, Aspar, the two Theodorics, Videmir, and Tufa,—popes, patriarchs, Greek princesses and heretics, a varied crowd, intermingling, fighting, destroying, and devouring each other, like the creatures which the microscope reveals in a drop of stagnant water.

The arrangement of these characters on the historic stage, the estimate of their motives, their vices or their virtues, and the narrative of the parts they played, would demand a master hand, and would also form no unworthy task for its dramatic skill. But the task could not be accomplished satisfactorily except in a separate work, and such a work is still among the things which the historical student has most earnestly to desire.* My limits, unfortunately, confine me

* Singularly enough, since these words were written, this has been done. The "Récits de l'Histoire Romaine," by M. Amédée Thierry, accomplish, in his own admirable style, all that is required. These pages were unfortunately in the press before his just-published work reached my hands, and I have therefore been enabled to avail myself

to a meagre narrative, which, however, must be longer and more specific than it will be possible to employ elsewhere in the present work; for here we touch upon the very cardinal and critical period of that era in the world's history with which it is our object to deal.

Twenty-nine miserable years passed away. The Visigoth power was now paramount on both sides of the Alps. Theodoric, grandson of the great Alaric, despite the policy of his brother Thorismond, had ascended the throne of that kingdom which his uncles, Adolphus and Wallia, consolidated in Gaul and Spain. He made Toulouse his capital, and soon obtained a predominance in the counsels of Gaul. At Rome all was feebleness and confusion. When the populace tore to pieces Maximus, the coward who fled before the face of the Vandals, Theodoric II., king of the Goths in Gaul, persuaded Avitus of Auvergne, who had once saved the Empire from the Huns, to ascend the throne.* But Avitus was not a man of the iron stamp which the age required. The time had passed when a Roman, or Romanized Gaul, had any chance of retrieving the destinies of the Empire, or even of directing

A.D. 456.

of it only to a very limited extent. It is a source of great satisfaction to me to find that he has anticipated my ideas upon the importance of this critical period of history; and I may perhaps be permitted to quote from his preface the following confirmation (pp. 10, 11):—"Les causes dernières de la grande catastrophe qui sépare le monde ancien du monde moderne, sont comprises dans ces vingt-six années: dislocation des ressorts du gouvernement romain; oppression des empereurs par les patrices barbares, préfets du prétoire des Césars, durant cette agonie de l'Empire; antagonisme de l'Orient et de l'Occident; essai des provinces pour se constituer en états indépendants; dictature demi-barbare, demi-romaine, élevée sur les ruines du principat; marché passé solennellement entre l'empereur de Constantinople et un roi barbare pour lui livrer l'Italie, et installation d'un peuple étranger au midi des Alpes: voilà ce que renferme ce quart de siècle, période suprême de la nationalité italienne." M. Thierry has also, I perceive, assigned that importance to Sidonius which led me to defer special notice of him to a distinct work, and has given many of the passages which I had selected as interesting and valuable.

* Lecture IV.

its affairs. All power, as is wont to be the case in such periods, had passed into the stronger hands of those who wielded the actual physical force of the state. Rome had employed barbarian soldiers as her servants until they became her masters. Like the mayors of the palace in Frank history, and like successful military adventurers in every age, they engrossed all real authority, even when they allowed its names and titles to remain in the feeble hands of others.

Count Ricimer, a Sueve, but connected with the Goths by maternal descent,* cousin of Theodoric, and pupil of Aëtius in the art of war, had distinguished himself greatly in the Vandal invasions, and was now generalissimo of the Roman armies. This man, to adopt an expression of M. Thierry, renewed, after a lapse of 500 years, the dictatorship of Sylla, and died quietly in his bed. He became absolute at Rome, and persuaded Avitus that a mitre would better become his brow than an imperial crown. Again, then, as in the case of Arbogastes, a barbarian had the sceptre in his hand; but again, also, the barbarian refused to close his grasp. The shadow of the great Name was upon his spirit, and inspired him with a politic hesitation, perhaps with a superstitious awe. He clothed with the purple his ancient comrade Majorian, a distinguished man, bred in the school of Aëtius,—a soldier and a patriot.† A.D. 457.

* "Invictus Ricimer, patre Suevus, a genetrice Getes."—SIDONIUS APOLLINARIS, *Pan. Majoriani.*

† The panegyric of Sidonius is less inflated than usual, and was probably deserved:—

> "Imperium jam consul habet, quem purpura non plus
> Quam lorica operit, cujus diademata frontem
> Non luxu sed lege tegent, meritisque laborum
> Post palmam palmata venit; decora omnia regni
> Accumulant fasces, et princeps consule crescit."
>
> SID. APOLL., *Pan. Maj.* v. 2—6.

Ricimer imagined that an emperor of his own making would be a willing tool. In this he was deeply deceived. Majorian was one of the best men who had ever mounted the imperial throne, and, had opportunity been granted to him, would have played a noble part in the history of his times. He attempted to revive the best traditions of the past, and to govern as a Roman, but also as a reformer. He met the fate of all reformers in an entirely hopeless age. It had been his ambition to humble the Vandal; and his military and naval preparations seemed to insure success. The resources of Italy, Gaul, and Spain were put into requisition. Whole forests descended into the sea; the trees cut were as numerous as the waves.* It is said that, like our own Alfred, he disguised himself, and personally visited in Africa, the capital, and even the arsenal of his enemies. As he passed the threshold, the suspended arms clanged with an ominous sound. We may discredit the romantic story; but, as Gibbon says, it would not have been imagined save in the life of a hero. Traitors were found, instigated, it is said, by Ricimer, who disclosed his plans to the Vandals. They availed themselves of the information to destroy his fleet, in the harbour of Carthago nova, the modern Carthagena. Soon afterwards he perished in a sedition of his own soldiery, who acted, there can be little doubt, under encouragement from Ricimer. The Sueve substituted one Severus, a Lucanian, of whom history says nothing save that, after a reign of less than four years, he became distasteful to his patron, and perished, as he probably deserved,

A.D. 461.

* "Interea duplici texis dum littore classem
Inferno superoque mari, cadit omnis in æquor
Silva tibi, nimiumque diu per utrumque recisus
Apennine, latus, navalique arbore dives
Non minus in pelagus nemorum quam mittis aquarum;

* * * * * *

Non tantis major Atrides
Carpathium texit ratibus."

SIDON. APOLL., *Pan. Maj.* v. 440—448.

by poison. Ricimer, now completely dominant, was in no hurry to give the Romans a new master and himself a possible rival. Things continued in this state from the close of the year 465 till the spring of 467. It was a degrading position for Rome; and it seemed necessary to bestir herself, if she was ever to have a new emperor; for Ricimer would do nothing. In her difficulty she applied to Constantinople, and Leo, flattered by the request, sent the most distinguished man in his dominions. This was Anthemius, commander of the Ægean fleet, son-in-law of the emperor, and connected by descent with the great Constantine. He had formerly married a daughter of the old emperor, and might, had he so chosen, have opposed the election of Leo himself with every chance of success. He preferred distinction in a private station; and the same feeling made him hesitate before accepting the throne of the West. The hesitation was natural; for the acceptance involved a condition of which he bitterly complained, but which it was utterly impossible to avoid. Ricimer demanded his daughter in marriage. To the proud Greek it seemed the sacrifice of another Iphigenia; but he was compelled to assent. It was among the tumult of exultation and feasting, occasioned by this marriage, that Sidonius arrived on a political mission at the court of the new emperor. He found business entirely suspended; the whole city, as it seemed to him, had gone mad, and he hides himself in a private chamber to write a letter to his friend.* Soon he himself became one of the most influential personages in the new court; and, forgetful of the fate of his father-in-law Avitus, bestowed a panegyric upon the new emperor from

A.D. 467.

* "Hoc ipso tempore quo hæc mihi exarabantur, vix per omnia theatra, macella, prætoria, fora, templa, gymnasia, thalassio fescenninus explicaretur, atque etiam nunc e contrario studia sileant, negotia quiescant, judicia conticescant, differantur legationes, vacet ambitus, et inter scurrilitates histrionum totus actionum seriarum status peregrinetur."—SID. APOLL., *Epist.* i. 5.

Greece, quite as fulsome, and much more voluminous, than any he had heard in the streets. The relations between Ricimer and Anthemius, with pride and coldness on one side, and a determination to domineer on the other, were not likely to be very intimate or very lasting. Anthemius had brought with him from Greece Greek prejudices and habits, and, what was worse, Greek theology. This soon rendered him unpopular with the Latins and the Latin Church. Ricimer skilfully availed himself of the fact, and speedily came to an open rupture with his son-in-law. Epiphanius, bishop of Pavia, one of the great and influential churchmen who in that age shared the moral power of emperors and barbarian generals, for a moment reconciled, or seemed to reconcile, the two. The truce was a hollow one. Ricimer, hanging about Northern Italy with a most formidable force, was only biding his time. Nor was his opportunity long delayed. Great events had happened at Constantinople. Aspar, the Alan, a patrician of barbarian birth, who occupied towards the Greek emperor a position very similar to that in which Ricimer himself stood to Anthemius, had been assassinated by Zeno's eunuchs; and Zeno, with unconcealed delight, communicated the fact to his western brother. The example might prove suggestive. Ricimer took the alarm, and determined to be beforehand with his adversary. Most opportunely, a rival candidate had just appeared, under the patronage of the Vandals, who, encouraged by the disastrous defeat of the great expedition against them, had determined to interfere in Western politics. One of the three princesses, daughters of Valentinian, who had been carried off from Rome after its sack by Genseric, had, after her release from Carthage, espoused Olybrius, a distinguished senator of the Anician house, to whom, before her disastrous deportation, she had been warmly attached. Olybrius, it seems, had long before entertained ambitious designs, grounded perhaps on the hope of this alliance: the Vandal king connived at the

marriage, with the intention of employing the spouse of the imperial lady for his own purposes. After a delay of several years, the occasion at last arrived. The Vandal made friends with Ricimer, his former enemy, and instigated Olybrius to join him in Italy for the purpose of dethroning Anthemius. Ricimer and Olybrius met in Northern Italy, at the beginning of the year. Throwing aside all disguise, they instantly proclaimed war, and marched upon Rome. A.D. 472. Save some Gaulish mercenaries under Belimer, a gallant officer, the unfortunate Anthemius had few troops upon whom to rely. The siege of Rome was to him and his party a slow torture, moral and physical; for every day the enemy won some advanced post or street, and every day the strict blockade increased the severity of the famine within the walls. At last, nothing was left to Anthemius but to take the advice of the senators and fly. As he was hastily making for Ostia, on the 11th July, he was overtaken and slain by the hand of Ricimer himself, say the chroniclers, to whom dramatic effects of this sort are ever dear. Rome once more underwent the horrid fate of a city taken by assault. Thrice within sixty years had she been sacked "from turret to foundation-stone;" on the two former occasions by the Goth and the Vandal; this time, in the bitter mockery of fate, by her own general and her own armies. Ricimer and Olybrius did not long enjoy their triumph. Faithless and cruel in their lives, in their deaths they were not divided. The first perished forty days after the death of his father-in-law, in lingering tortures, believed by the historians of the time to have been a retribution for his deeds of blood; in sixty-five days more, his accomplice followed him to the grave. The *rôle* of king-maker was for a moment vacant: it was grasped by a not very powerful hand. The Burgundian Gondebaud, or Gundobald, nephew of the Patrician, had naturally been appointed, by the gratitude of Olybrius, to his uncle's place and duties. It came to pass, therefore, that

upon the death of Olybrius, this somewhat obscure individual found that "greatness had been thrust upon him," and that he was, in fact, the disposer of the throne of the Cæsars. After four months' delay, he selected for the vacant seat one Glycerius, an Italian, captain of the guard to the late emperor, a man altogether unsuited to a great destiny. Gundobald himself, whose heart was on the opposite side of the Alps, and whose only ambition was to revenge himself upon his Burgundian brothers, who had driven him into exile, soon found that his presence was required in Gaul by domestic affairs, and left his *protégé* to shift for himself. He was soon involved in trouble; for by this time the Ostrogoths, under Videmir, probably directed by the treachery of the Eastern empire, demanded lands, and, in the usual barbarian fashion, declared they would take them if not given. Glycerius had a good army and a good position. His enemies were half-starved and discouraged. He had an excellent chance of exterminating them, or, at the least, of driving them out of Italy. He preferred to point to the long line of the Savoyard Alps, and say to the barbarian: "Behind those mountain-tops lies Gaul, a good land and a pleasant one. There dwell your brethren the Visigoths. They will welcome you with open arms; and, by our imperial authority, we will grant you lands beside them." That right had long ceased, practically, to belong to the Roman emperors; but, availing themselves of the pretext, the Ostrogoths scaled the Alps, and, pouring into Gaul, inflicted the frightful desolation of which we shall have to speak hereafter. The craven and selfish Glycerius was fated soon to meet his reward. The result of his compact with Videmir rendered him contemptible in the eyes of all who bore the Roman name: the army were discontented with the man who had sold their honour to the barbarian; his domestic administration was utterly venal and base. In the mean time, Leo,

A.D. 473.

the Greek emperor, indignant at the death of Anthemius, and more indignant still that an obscure Burgundian should dispose of a throne which he in fact regarded as his own fief, had fixed upon a candidate, and supported him with a large force. Julius Nepos was nephew to Marcellinus, a brave and skilful captain, formerly the idol of the camp, and one of those promising men whose lives the dagger of Ricimer had cut short. He was at this time successfully governing Dalmatia, as a sovereign prince. Leo summoned him to Constantinople, married him to a niece of the empress Verina, and landed him at Ravenna, by the help of a powerful fleet. Jan. 474. Glycerius fled instantly from his capital; Julius occupied his vacant palace, and was immediately proclaimed Cæsar, in the name of the Eastern emperor, in the midst of an applauding multitude, attracted, most probably, more by curiosity than zeal; for Julius was too much like a mere nominee of the foreigner, to excite much enthusiasm in Italy. Glycerius fled to Rome; but the Senate declared for neutrality, and closed its gates. He collected a few troops, and awaited his rival. Julius appeared with an army, which he had gathered together by bribes, promises, and flattery. Though not strong, they inspired their opponents with terror. Glycerius again fled, without attempting a general action, and was caught, while attempting to escape by the fort. Crouching and terrified, he was brought before the conqueror, who, instead of having him decapitated, cut his hair, and made him, on the spot, bishop of Salona, a small town, capital of Dalmatia, the province which he had himself administered, and which he believed to be devoted to his interests. He had better have followed the ordinary practice; for Glycerius lived to turn and sting with venom that was deadly.

Rome opened her gates to the conqueror, and inaugurated him as Augustus with great solemnity. But she had not

forgotten the reign of Anthemius, and showed little pleasure at the renewal of a similar experiment. Julius endeavoured, by the modesty of his demeanour and the impartiality of his administration, to conciliate popularity. Many reforms were effected, many deserving persons promoted to high place, and many corrupt officials cashiered. The provinces were in raptures. Sidonius, ever ready with a panegyric, hails him as "Augustus glorious and supreme, in morals as in arms."* But it was too late. Troubles had arisen in Gaul not to be overcome either by policy or force. Euric, king of the Visigoths, interpreting, rightly enough, the fall of Glycerius as the installation of his enemies in power, got together his warriors, and fell savagely upon Roman Gaul. Among the mountains of Auvergne alone did he encounter any resolute resistance. Sidonius, the brave bishop, and his equally brave brother-in-law Ecdicius, held out, amid immense sufferings within the walls of Clermont, under the shadow of the gigantic Puy-de-Dôme, and close beside Gergovia, almost the last stronghold of that primitive Gallic freedom which had so long defied the arms of Cæsar. Euric recoiled for the moment, but, infuriated by the repulse, he swore to have Auvergne. As this meant the entire extinction of Romanism beyond the Alps, the last Cæsars held it in a desperate grasp. Julius adopted every possible expedient: he sent ambassadors, and the holy bishop Epiphanius himself, who had never been known to fail in negotiation, for the purpose of reasoning with the Goth; he convoked all the noblesse of Italy—an unprecedented measure—to meet him at Milan, and advise upon the state of affairs. All was in vain. Euric insisted upon Auvergne, and nothing but Auvergne. For that he would give up the Narbonnaise. To save even this much, the emperor consented. "Shame,"

* Sidon. Apollinaris, v. 16. Compare, also, the letter to Audax, the new prefect of Rome, viii. 7.

writes Sidonius; "our slavery has been made the price of the security of others—the slavery of Auvergne!"* Evil fortune appeared to pursue the doomed emperor. In Gaul he had been compelled to sacrifice his best friends and most faithful servants to his worst enemies. From Constantinople he received the bitter intelligence that Leo, his friend and patron, was no more. The sedition which followed his decease, showed that aid was no longer to be expected from the East. But the severest blow of all was that which placed him in the hands of a man who had the will and the power to seal his fate.† This man was Orestes the Patrician, a Pannonian, who had been an officer about the person of

* Sidon. Apollinaris, Epist. vii. 7.

† The following sketch of Orestes will help us to understand one of the most interesting men of the age, and, indeed, the character of the age itself:—"De tous les aventuriers romains ou barbares que produisit le Vme Siècle, ce siècle des grands aventuriers de l'ancien monde, aucun n'offrit dans sa vie de plus étranges contrastes que cet Oreste, sorti de la tente d'Attila, pour aller fermer, sur le trône impérial d'Occident, en la personne de son fils, la succession de Jules César, et d'Auguste. Né à Pettau, en Illyrie, d'une famille honnête de provinciaux, il s'était allié à une plus illustre, en épousant la fille du Comte Romulus, personnage considérable, même hors de sa province, et honoré de plusieurs missions par les Césars de Ravenne. Avec une merveilleuse souplesse d'esprit, que n'embarrassaient les scrupules de conscience, Oreste savait toujours accommoder son patriotisme aux vicissitudes de sa patrie. Romain au temps où la Pannonie était romaine, barbare lorsque les Huns l'occupèrent, mais prêt à redevenir Romain au premier retour de fortune, il servit loyalement, à mesure qu'elles se présentèrent, toutes les causes que lui imposa la nécessité. Attila n'eut pas de ministre plus fidèle, l'Empire de plus dangereux adversaire, tant que dura la domination des Huns. Mais à la mort du Conquérant, il regarda ses engagements comme rompus, et refusant de prendre part aux luttes de ses compagnons d'armes, il vint avec sa famille et ses trésors, se fixer en Italie, où il dépensait noblement la part qu'il avait touchée dans le pillage de l'Empire. Ainsi rendu à sa première situation, le secrétaire d'Attila se montrait un bon et utile Romain. Sa profonde connaissance des mœurs et des intérêts le fit rechercher par les ministres des empereurs, et par les empereurs eux-mêmes. Il se glissa dans leur intimité, fut bientôt de leurs conseils, et obtint un commandement dans le corps des domestiques, poste envié et réellement important, en ce qu'il servait de marchepied à tout."—AM. THIERRY, *Récits de l'Histoire Romaine,* ch. vi. *ad init.*

Attila, and had even fulfilled the office of ambassador to Constantinople. Upon his master's death, he offered to the Empire the dubious service of his sword, and it was eagerly accepted. Cleverly keeping aloof during the late struggle, he had been employed by Julius to re-organize the imperial army, under the walls of Rome. In the process he contrived to gain the affections of the soldiers, and was now waiting an opportunity to make use of their attachment. Fatally for himself, Julius gave him the very opportunity he desired, by ordering him to lead a strong division of his troops into Gaul, and there superintend the surrender of Auvergne to Euric and his Goths. The army were indignant at the transaction, and at the part in it assigned to themselves. Why should they be banished beyond the Alps? Why should they assist strangers to receive a reward which their own valour, and their own services much better merited? Were they ever to serve a degenerate and cowardly Greek for nothing? When would there arise a man of their own blood to lead them once more to victory, and to bestow upon them its prizes? How far these menacing murmurs owed their origin to the Patrician himself,—whether the soldiery were instigated to insurrection by their commander, or the commander forced into treason by the cupidity and ambition of his soldiery, can never now be satisfactorily known; but one thing is certain, to this man and his army is to be ascribed the "beginning of the end." Sulkily quitting Rome, they continued their march towards the north, until they reached a spot where the road bifurcated to Ravenna and Milan. From this spot they could dominate all Italy, and here, therefore, they boldly threw off the mask. Julius, buried in false security at Ravenna, did not discover the designs of his general until it was too late. There were no means of defence at hand. No sooner had Orestes assailed the causeway which connected Ravenna with the mainland, than Julius em-

barked with his Dalmatians, and made the best of his way to Salona. There he found his former rival and predecessor on the throne, whom, it may be remembered, he had contumeliously converted into a bishop. What a strange revolution of Fortune's wheel!—what a περιπέτεια, as the Greeks called it, or coming round of the course of events! And what a subject for an historical picture, is the meeting of these two discrowned monarchs in the little Dalmatian town. Nepos had better have sought the neighbourhood of any other man in Europe; for afterwards, when fortune began again to dawn upon him, in the troubles between Odoacer and Theodoric, and the eyes of men were once more turning towards the East for aid, Glycerius had him basely assassinated in his country house, on the 9th of May, A.D. 480. But this is to anticipate. Orestes entered Ravenna on the 28th of March, 475. Imitating the policy of his predecessors, he refused the purple, and would not even enter the palace. A very inconvenient interregnum ensued, which was broken by what M. Thierry calls a *coup de théâtre*, but which was just as probably an outbreak of the entirely unmanageable soldiery. A party of them forced their way into the residence of the Patrician, seized upon his young son, and elevating him upon a buckler, after the barbarian practice, paraded him through the streets, amid much applause, as the new Augustus. He had already been christened Romulus; and his youth and small stature, which was too short for the purple robe forced upon him by the soldiers, caused the conversion of the second name into its diminutive Augustulus. Thus the last of the Cæsars united in his own person the names of the founder of Rome and the founder of the Empire. It was a bitter mockery of fate, that the memory of the victor of Actium, and of the first of the Roman kings, should be recalled to the memory of their descendants at the very moment when the work they had done was about to be irredeemably destroyed; when

A.D. 475.

"the Empire without bounds" had collapsed within the walls of what was now only an Italian town, and "the eternal glory" was to pass away from their own people for ever.*

To make an emperor was comparatively an easy task,—it had been often done of late; but to keep him in his place was a very different matter. The bands of Orestes did not forget the reasons for which they had gathered beneath his standard. If they made revolutions, they were determined it should be for their own benefit, as well as for that of their leader, and they clamoured for the lands which they felt themselves to have deserved as fairly as the Ostrogoth or the Frank. Their demand was for one-third of Italy. Orestes might well hesitate: a boundless perspective of misery opened out before his eyes, the certain result of this gigantic confiscation. Besides, a change had come over him, not unusual in the circumstances. His sympathies were attracted towards the people who were now his subjects; he could not forget the glorious traditions of their past, and probably entertained hopes for their future. "At the bottom," says M. Thierry, "he was Roman at heart, and, flattered by the trust which the Italians reposed in him, he would have blushed to attach his name to so savage a spoliation."† He refused the demand. The refusal was fatal to himself, to his son, to the dynasty of the Roman Cæsars. The Man had long been awaiting the Hour: he appeared in the person of Odoacer, son of Edecon, another minister of Attila's, chief of the Heruli, and an officer in the Patrician's service; the boldest, most unscrupulous, and most successful of all the barbarian mercenaries who had crossed the Alps. A singular anecdote is related of his youth. Having left his country with a small band of

* Virgil, Æn. i. 278.

† Récits de l'Histoire Romaine, ch. vii.

adventurers who were seeking service in Italy, he passed by the cell of St. Severinus near the Danube, a bishop of piety and immense influence, as well as of unnumbered good works, whose history forms a long and interesting episode in the troubled annals of the times. In entering the humble cell, one of the visitors, a young man of immense proportions, was compelled to bow his head, and even when inside, to remain in a stooping position. Regarding him with a penetrating glance, the saint augured his future greatness from his mien, and declared it in prophetic words. "Go," said he to the young man; "go to Italy, clad in thy poor and ragged sheepskins; thou shalt soon give greater gifts to thy friends."* The young man treasured up the words in his heart, and remembered them at the critical moment. His martial stature and soldier-like appearance soon found him a patron in the person of his father's colleague, the Pannonian Orestes, and a place in the body-guard of the emperor, then stationed at Ravenna. In all the wars of the time, Odoacer distinguished himself by his immense physical strength, his fearlessness, and the influence which such a character enabled him to exercise over his fellow-soldiers. He now found himself among the Rugi, Alani, Scyri, and Turcilingi, who were in some sort his own people. They were the very men to whom Orestes owed most, and who were naturally most jealous of the withdrawal of his sympathies, and the favour he had shown to the Romans. Odoacer stepped boldly forward, and proclaimed that if they would follow him, they should have the lands which their ungrateful and unworthy leader had refused. The standard of revolt was immediately raised, and the barbarian army, largely recruited by their brethren, whom the scent of blood had lured like

* I am indebted to both Gibbon and M. Thierry for this anecdote. The latter appears most completely to have caught the spirit of the saint's prophecy; but is not "tu es grand, et pourtant tu granderas encore," *rather* free for "eum gloriosum fore"? And we should surely read *cito* for *citra*, in the Latin quotation from the Vit. S. Severini.

vultures from beyond the Alps, advanced against their former master. Orestes secured his son in Ravenna, and went forth to meet his enemy in the Lombard plains, so often dyed with the blood of nations. He could make no stand, and was compelled to shut himself up in Pavia. But neither his courage nor the sanctity attaching to the great Epiphanius, its bishop, which had so often awed both emperors and barbarian kings, was in this instance able to save the town. Its splendid buildings and its churches were wrapped in flames; the whole place resembled a caldron of fire. In the confusion, Orestes was made prisoner. The barbarian victor fell into no such mistake as that of Nepos: he caused his former patron and master to be conveyed to Piacenza, and there put to death, upon the anniversary of his triumphant entry into Ravenna the preceding year. The execution took place the 28th of August: on the 4th of September he was before Ravenna, which contained the young Augustulus, and the few remaining partisans of Italian nationality. A battle was fought; but it could have only one result. The barbarians poured into the town, and spreading through all quarters, speedily discovered the unhappy prince, who had cast aside the purple in his terror, and dragged him before Odoacer. He is said to have wept and prayed for mercy. Odoacer, fearing nothing from such a foe, and commiserating his youth and his beauty, which was great, spared his life, and consigned him, with an annual pension of 6,000 pieces of gold, to the luxurious keeping of a Campanian villa, which received its name from Lucullus, and had previously belonged to both Marius and Sylla. There, where the Capo di Miseno looks down upon the blue waters of the Bay of Naples and the bright islands which stud its breast, in perhaps the most beautiful situation in the world, amid the groves, the fountains and grottos, the baths and the halls of marble, and surrounded by all the appliances of splendid

A.D. 476.

luxury accumulated by the most luxurious man in Rome, it was possible for the last of Roman emperors to reflect upon the condition to which that luxury, more than any other cause, had reduced the Empire. But did he, or any other ruler of men, ever elicit practical good for himself or for his people from such a contemplation?

LECTURE VI.

ITALY—ODOACER—THEODORIC—THE GREEK INVASION —THE LOMBARDS—THE FRANKS AND THE PAPACY.

"Il faut distinguer dans le roi des Ostrogoths deux hommes, un Théodoric *barbare*, livré aux instincts les plus sauvages de sa race, et un autre *civilisé*, élevé à Constantinople, intelligent, généreux par occasion, mais empruntant très-souvent à la politique Byzantine ses propres armes contre elle-même."—M. A. THIERRY, *Récits de l'Histoire Romaine*, Préface.

"Royally laughed he then;
Dear was that craft to him,
Odin All-father
Shaking the clouds.
Cunning are women all,
Bold and importunate!
Longbeards their name shall be;
Ravens shall thank them.
Where the women are heroes,
What must the men be like?
Theirs is the victory;
What need of me."

KINGSLEY, *Hypatia*.

SYNOPSIS.—Odoacer, king of Italy.—His wise administration; damaged by the partition of lands.—Intrigues of the Greeks in favour of Nepos.—Senate declare one emperor sufficient.—Odoacer made patrician.—Zeno, the Greek emperor, deposed; applies for aid to Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths.—Odoacer involved in hostilities beyond the Alps; offends the Germans.—Quarrel between the two Theodorics at Constantinople; their reconciliation.—Theodoric the Amal assails Constantinople.—The emperor compelled to listen to his demands; grants him a Pragmatic to reduce Italy.—March of the Ostrogoths.—Prolonged conflict between Odoacer and Theodoric.—The former makes terms in Ravenna, and is assassinated.—Theodoric sole king of Italy; his wisdom, power, and administration; dies.—Italy invaded by the Greeks under Belisarius; reduced to a province.—Revolt of the Goths; put down by Narses.—Narses recalled; invites the Lombards.—Alboin, king of the Lombards, exterminates the

Gepidæ, and invades Italy; his reign.—Anarchy.—Clef.—Autharis.—Agilulf.—Involved relations with the Papacy.—Gregory the Great.—The Franks brought into Italy against the Lombards.—Charles Martel the Frank, and Luitprand the Lombard.—Pepin le Bref and Astolphus.—Dotation of the Exarchate to the Popes.—Desiderius and Charlemagne.—Renewal of the Dotation.—Coronation of Charlemagne, Christmas, A.D. 800.—How far were its results foreseen by the actors?

ODOACER was really now master of Italy, in a sense, and to a degree, much more complete than any of his barbarian predecessors. The throne of the Cæsars had fallen at last; yet that fall, which it was once supposed would convulse the whole civilized world and involve civilization itself in the crash which it must produce, seems to have been received by contemporaries with little emotion. A few dry lines in the chroniclers occupy the place of funeral dirge or panegyric. Jornandes alone, says M. Thierry, some years later, blows his barbarian trumpet over the tomb of the Empire, but it is to proclaim the advent of his Goths.* This apathy appears to have excited the surprise of historians, yet, after all, it was natural enough. So long and gradual had been the preparation, that it left nothing to startle or alarm; so many other men had won nearly the same position in Italy as the vigorous soldier of fortune who now was arbiter of her fate, that the situation was not regarded as an exceptional one. And in the second place, it was not yet certain that it would be perpetual. Nepos, the candidate of the Greek emperor, still lived, and the Greek emperor had by no means abandoned his claim to interfere in the succession of the Roman Cæsars. He possessed the will, and might, as heretofore, possess the power, to set aside the barbarian ruler, and substitute what would be considered the authority of a Roman in his place. Lastly, men are not much excited by events which do not produce any material effect upon their fortunes. No such effect was produced, or could be expected, in this

* Jornandes, Reb. Get. § 46.

case: the change from a Cæsar and a senate to a barbarian king wrought no revolution in their outward lives, nor did it disclose to their eyes the prospects of any revolution in the future. They had suffered so much, and lost so much; they had descended so far in the steep path which led to ruin and degradation, under their former government, that there was little prospect of their enduring more, or sinking further under a new rule. On the contrary, if they were capable by this time of political forecast, they probably anticipated an amelioration. For these reasons, therefore, they accepted very quietly the domination of Odoacer, and made no dirge over the glories of their past.

The conduct of Odoacer himself contributed to the same result. Like his predecessors, he eschewed the violent contrast between the past and the present, which would have been exhibited by a barbarian seated on the throne and wearing the purple of the Cæsars. Personally, he appears only to have been anxious to retain the title of "king;" and this may account for the various appellations which he received from his contemporaries:—king of the Heruli; king of the Rugi, Scyri, and Turcilingians; or King of the Nations. His administration has been highly, and not undeservedly, commended by Gibbon. "The laws of the emperors were strictly enforced, and the civil administration of Italy was still exercised by the prætorian prefect and his subordinate officers. Odoacer devolved on the Roman magistrates the odious and oppressive task of collecting the public revenue, and he reserved for himself the merit of seasonable and popular indulgence."* But whatever may have been the merits of his policy, he laboured under one fatal disadvantage, which no wisdom or forbearance could remedy. He had promised one-third of Italy to the barbarian mercenaries, and the fulfilment of that promise he could not possibly evade. The result was that almost unlimited

* Gibbon, ch. xxxvi. *ad finem.*

misery from which Orestes shrank. These men possessed no one qualification for the new position in which they were placed. Other barbarian settlements may have succeeded, as for instance that of the Visigoths and Burgundians in Gaul; but then these migratory bands carried with them, in however rude a form, the elements of settled and social life: they had their flocks and their herds, their wives and their little ones; the soldiers of Odoacer had nothing but their swords. It was seen in the previous partitions of land by Sylla and Augustus, that men who had grown grey beneath the eagles were altogether unfitted for domesticity. Even under favourable conditions, we are assured by Tacitus that the experiment of converting legionaries into colonists was unsuccessful, as they were entirely unaccustomed to contract marriage or bring up families. The reason he assigns is a remarkable one, very characteristic of the Roman genius, and of the system by which they constructed so large an empire. "The men were not sent," he says, "as in former days, by whole legions at a time, with their tribunes, centurions, and soldiers of each separate rank, so as by common consent and common affection to create a little republic among themselves" (ut communi consensu et caritate rempublicam efficerent).* What the soldiers of Rome herself failed to effect, was certainly not to be effected by her rude invaders from beyond the Alps. In Cicero's days, scarce any of the property confiscated by Sylla remained in the hands of his military colonists or their representatives; it was not long before the lands acquired by Odoacer's mercenaries had passed altogether away from them, and they were as destitute and rapacious as heretofore. Though, therefore, Odoacer still continued the machinery of the imperial government, and its wheels still revolved from the effects of the impulse which had been acting upon them for so many years, a very grievous state of things arose throughout all the peninsula. Exactions

* See Tac. Ann. xiv. 27; and cf. Lect. ii. p. 99.

more oppressive, and poverty deeper than ever, exhausted the miserable inhabitants. The officials are even said to have revived an old imperial expedient, and to have multiplied the months of the year, that they might increase the amount of the yearly tribute.

Under these circumstances, it was plain that the chance of retaining his position depended, for Odoacer, very much upon the dispositions of the Greek emperor, and the probability of his interference. For the present, the confusion of affairs at Constantinople was so great that the "King of the Nations" had little to fear from that quarter. By the intrigues of the empress-mother Verina, Zeno had been ejected from the throne and banished the country, while his place was supplied by one Basiliscus. Determined to avail himself of every aid which might facilitate his return, he applied to Theodoric, who had just succeeded to the Ostrogoth throne, a prince of pure Amal blood, and, as we have already seen, of Byzantine education. Theodoric eagerly accepted his overtures, for he had many inducements to assist the exiled emperor. In part, perhaps, he was moved by an ancient friendship, contracted during his early residence at the Greek court; but the most potent reasons for his conduct were to be found in jealousy of a rival, another Ostrogoth, though not an Amal, Theodoric, the son of Triar, a powerful chieftain in the nominal service of Basiliscus; and secondly in a deeply-cherished ambition, for which he trusted to find an opportunity in the chapter of accidents, should he succeed in mixing himself up with the affairs of the East. For the moment, he was at Novæ, on the Danube, on the look-out for fresh settlements. He instantly marched upon Constantinople, at the head of his warriors. He was too late, for the revolution had been accomplished without him. Zeno, however, from motives of policy, received his former friend with warmth, loaded him with honours, and affected to believe himself deeply indebted to the Ostrogoth for his

restoration. And now, for the first time, he was enabled to devote his attention to the affairs of Italy. True to the policy of his predecessors, he determined to support a Byzantine candidate, and listened to the earnest prayers of Nepos, who, from his Dalmatian retirement, appealed in pathetic terms to Zeno, as to one who, like himself, had been a dethroned monarch and a banished man. Theodoric, residing in the imperial palace, necessarily became acquainted with the state of affairs, and at once betrayed the thought of his heart,—a thought never abandoned through long years of discouragement,—by offering to reseat Nepos on the Roman throne with his own Ostrogoths and at his own risk. Zeno managed to decline such perilous aid, but manifested his fixed intention to restore Nepos. The situation became a grave one for Odoacer; but his barbarian cunning was not without a resource. He, too, had a dethroned emperor in his keeping, and he resolved himself to play the same card as his adversary had played. He compelled Romulus Augustulus to write to the Roman senate from his Campanian villa, and advise them to declare to Zeno that a single emperor was now sufficient for the wants of both Italy and Greece, and that they felt their personal safety entirely secure under the excellent protection of Odoacer. The Roman patriciate appear to have felt that the great drama was at last played out, and they hastened with decency to close the scene. Acquiescing in the suggestion of their late master, they transmitted the desired message to Constantinople; and as an earnest of their sincerity, sent, or were compelled by Odoacer to send with it, as an offering to Zeno, the ornaments of the imperial palace, and all the insignia of imperial power which their researches could discover in Italy. The diadems, the purple mantles, and doubtless other royal properties, which had once adorned the persons of Augustus, Trajan, or Theodosius, went to furnish, as M. Thierry says, a cabinet in the palace of the Greek emperor; or found, perhaps, a still more undignified resting-place

in some curiosity-shop at Constantinople: they were never again required by a *Roman* emperor of the West. Odoacer added his own request to that of the compliant senate. Zeno was flattered, perhaps well satisfied to have another powerful barbarian leader subjected to his influence. He graciously acceded to the united entreaty, and appointed Odoacer Patrician and governor of Italy in his own name, reserving, however, the rights of Nepos, whom he recommended to the senate as their legitimate emperor. Odoacer accepted the position, affected to consider that Zeno had granted the prayer of the senate, and ignored altogether the existence of the Dalmatian claimant. Yet still, in some parts of the Empire, as in Gaul, the deposition of Nepos had never yet been acknowledged; public documents were drawn up, and official acts performed in his name. It is impossible to say what were his actual chances of success, when they were cut short by the treacherous murder of May, 480 A.D.* This changed everything. Zeno ceased to trouble himself about Italy, for he felt that it would be difficult to discover another eligible candidate, and his own affairs were quite enough to engross his serious attention. The opportunity was not lost upon Odoacer, who strengthened himself by alliances on every side, recruited his troops, and looked to his fortified places.

One consequence of these political complications deserves specially to be remembered. Since the shameful cession of Auvergne by Glycerius, the Narbonnese province was the only part of Gaul still retained by the Roman government; but the Narbonnese province had persisted in refusing to acknowledge Odoacer, and, in default of a Western emperor, professed allegiance to the Byzantine court. The King of the Nations, released from all apprehensions with respect to Nepos, revenged himself by immediately ceding "the Narbonnaise" to the Visigoths. Thus perished for ever Roman dominion beyond the Alps. Not

* Lecture V. p. 265.

a foot of land was left to her in that splendid province, won by the expenditure of so much blood and gold, a province in which she had almost reproduced herself, and certainly had found the greatest ornament, as well as the surest safeguard of her empire.

The king of Italy, as he was now called, had not given up a valuable possession in Gaul from material weakness or mental imbecility. He obtained a magnificent equivalent in Sicily, which island he purchased from the Vandals after somewhat humiliating their arrogance by the triumph of his arms. This seems to have been the period of his wisest and most successful administration. Italianizing himself as much as possible, he was gradually doing away with many of the disadvantages imposed upon him as a ruler by his violent usurpation and barbarian birth. He acted through the senate, giving them, at any rate in appearance, the initiative in matters of legislation; though himself an Arian, he conciliated the clergy, and frequently found them funds; as for instance, when he so handsomely aided the holy Epiphanius to rebuild the churches of Pavia: finally, he gathered around him the most distinguished men among the Roman patriciate; and it is in this society that we first encounter the celebrated names which shed so bright a lustre upon the court of his successor—Symmachus, Boëthius, the Anician family, and Basilius, son of Sidonius's friend, and the still more illustrious Cassiodorus, the future chancellor of Theodoric. A singular incident occurred at this time, in which Basilius, as representative of Odoacer, played a prominent part. Upon the death of Pope Simplicius, an attempt was made to elect a new pope without the concurrence of the Patrician's authority. Basilius appeared in the midst of the ceremonial, as representative of his master, annulled the election, and compelled the clergy to proceed to a new one; he even obliged them to adopt a decree, which reserved for the future the rights of the civil

governor in all similar cases. It is true that, some twenty years afterwards, the Church was strong enough to rescind it; but it is startling to discover so early an instance of the triumph of Erastianism in the stronghold of sacerdotal authority; nor is it perhaps generally known, that so soon as the fifth century, a civil ruler was found to advance and maintain the sturdy pretensions of the house of Tudor.

A.D. 483.

It was not long, unfortunately, before the unceasing evils of barbarian warfare interrupted the progress of returning prosperity, and overclouded, though perhaps in a manner but little anticipated, the dawning promise of Odoacer's reign. His own kinsmen of Rugiland had never honoured the prophet sprung from their own country; more especially the royal family, in their barbarian pride, were kindled into jealousy by the honours of the soldier of fortune, who had left his home in a tunic of sheepskin, to seek adventure in the South. They indulged at once their malignity and their avarice, by plundering the Christians, particularly the flock of Severinus, the holy hermit who prophesied the future greatness of the young giant whose shadow had darkened his cell. Severinus was one of the most remarkable, certainly one of the most useful and influential men of the age. His name and his good works were known in every household in Christendom, and the "King of the Nations" might well consider it an honour, as well as a duty, to avenge his wrongs. He crossed the Alps at the head of a formidable host, penetrated into Noricum, and almost exterminated his guilty compatriots. The remnant of the persecuted Christians he transported into Italy. These exploits were deemed by himself and his flatterers well worthy of a triumph, and Rome saw for the last time that august ceremonial, which had ever concluded and commemorated the most brilliant glories of the Republic and the Empire. Odoacer, amid the acclamations of an

immense multitude, and at the head of a long train of armed soldiers laden with the spoils of war, wound his way through the streets in a car richly inlaid with gold and blazing with precious stones. Around him floated the captured banners of the barbarians, conspicuously embroidered with dragons and the forms of savage animals. Nor were there wanting the other more melancholy accessories of an ancient triumph, —in a Roman's eye, its crowning glory. Beside his car walked Fava, the captive king, with other members of the royal race, and, according to time-honoured precedent, upon the arrival of the procession at the Capitol, the unfortunate prisoner suffered decapitation. All, however, was not over in Rugiland yet. Frederic, the son of Fava, who proved himself perhaps the most barbarous and brutal prince of that barbarous age, renewed the struggle at the head of a few outlaws and brigands gathered from their hiding-places in the vast forests of the country. Odoacer was infuriated, and sending his brother at the head of a competent force, this time made a clean sweep of all his enemies, save Frederic himself, who took refuge with the king of the Ostrogoths. The success of the king of the Heruli was complete, yet it was fraught with evil consequences. It strengthened a rival by the adherence of a malignant and implacable enemy; it caused profound irritation and alarm among all the royal races in Germany, who were most unwilling to see Italian standards once more victoriously displayed on their side of the Alps, and who were profoundly indignant with the low-born mercenary who had brought degradation and death on a prince of the old heroic blood, and a member of the sacred fraternity of Teuton sovereigns: lastly, it wrought a most unfavourable change in the character of Odoacer himself, reviving all his early barbarian instincts of wrath and cruelty, and inflaming his mind with that arrogance which, in the words of the wise man, "goeth before a fall."

A.D. 487.

But in order to understand how these circumstances brought about the ruin of Odoacer, we must recur for a moment to the fortunes of the man who finally accomplished it, Theodoric the Amal, king of the Ostrogoths. We left him at Constantinople, equally feared and favoured by the emperor, who suspected his ambitious designs but was unable to dispense with his support. Zeno, in the hope of cementing the friendship existing between them, bestowed upon him the consular office and the highest dignities of state which had hitherto been borne by his rival Theodoric, the son of Triar. What was of still greater importance, he transferred the annual pension formerly paid to the troops of the latter, the Goths of Thrace, to the Amal's own followers, the Goths of Macedonia. The son of Triar, or the "Squinter," as he was sometimes called, one of the best captains of the age, was not the man to bear tamely the loss of influence and gold. He openly raised the standard of revolt, and his proximity was such as to alarm the citizens of Constantinople. Among the other dignities heaped upon the Amal by Zeno, was that of "Son in Arms," a form of adoption conceived in something of the spirit of mediæval knighthood, and conferred with much the same ceremonial. The emperor called upon his dutiful son to rescue his people from their peril. The Amal obeyed, and, nothing loath, led his warriors against his rival. But now occurred an event which caused, or which served as a pretext for, all the unfortunate relations which afterwards grew up between the "father and son in arms." The supplies and reinforcements promised by the emperor never reached Theodoric upon his march; it is even said that the guides supplied to him purposely conducted the army by almost inaccessible routes into a most dangerous position. Whether these things occurred from accident or design, is one of those important questions which history must for ever leave unsolved. Certain it is that the Amal found himself face to

face with his rival, who occupied a strong position upon a mountain in his front. The army of Theodoric were discontented and mutinous; they saw little to be gained by fighting to the death against their own brethren for a treacherous Greek who had betrayed them; and their fidelity was further tampered with by "the Squinter" himself, who, from a lofty rock upon the opposite side of the little river which ran between the two armies, harangued his enemies with the voice of a Stentor, and persuaded them that both parties had been brought there to destroy one another for the benefit of the Greeks. Theodoric's Goths forced him to abandon all idea of fighting, and to make peace with his rival; and then both generals despatched envoys and a menacing message to the emperor. The Amal made most monstrous claims, and justified them by the charge of treachery. Was the charge justifiable? If Theodoric had himself believed it, prior to the interview with his rival, would he have led his warriors so far on the road to destruction? Would he not have found means to communicate his disappointment and anger to Constantinople? Would not indignation have induced him personally to originate the counsels which he only adopted when forced upon him by his own troops? On the other hand, it is difficult to see what Zeno had to gain by treachery. Among the thousand perils which threatened him from treason within and enemies without the walls of his capital, the sincere friendship of the Amal was more valuable to him than any advantage which could have resulted from a conflict between the two Gothic armies. Be this as it may, Zeno vehemently denied all intention of playing false, and reproached his "son" with bitterness for his violence and unreasonable demands. He nevertheless concluded his speech by the promise of gold in immense sums, and the offer of a royal bride. Theodoric was to receive the hand of a princess "born upon the purple," an unprecedented honour for a barbarian, and one

which would have placed him on a level with the legitimate Cæsars. The offer must have been acceptable to his ambition, but he distrusted its sincerity; or perhaps he may have doubted his own influence over his discontented countrymen. He organized a combined movement with his rival, the son of Triar, but very soon abandoned the programme, and ravaged Macedonia and the banks of the Ægean with a merciless rapacity never surpassed by any barbarian inroad. Strange spectacle! An officer of the Empire, the emperor's adopted "son at arms," ravaging the emperor's country with fire and sword, and slaying the emperor's subjects. Zeno, reduced to despair by the bitter complaints of his people, and his own embarrassments, made peace with the other Theodoric, the son of Triar, a man ever ready to sacrifice anything or anybody to his interest. The Amal was as furious as though he himself had still possessed a claim upon his adopted father. Turning westward, he swept the whole open country of Thessaly and Macedonia, putting not only the garrisons but the unoffending inhabitants to the sword. Drawn towards Italy by the secret aspiration which slumbered, but was never extinguished in his heart, he determined to winter in Epirus, and make himself master of the town of Dyrrachium, the ancient Epidamnus, which commanded the passage of the Adriatic. The town was placed in his hands by the treachery of a wealthy Goth high in the service of the Empire. The emperor made a last effort to arrest or control the movements of his ambitious son. He despatched an envoy to Dyrrachium, who of course effected nothing; but the conference held between the two parties is remarkable for the renewed offer of Theodoric to place Nepos on the throne. In the mean time, the Greek garrisons in Thessaly and Epirus plucked up courage, and attacked the rear of the great Gothic horde in its passage through the defiles to join Theodoric at Dyrrachium. They slew his brother, and nearly captured his mother and sister.

This brought on a mountain warfare, which continued for some years, in which the Greeks, under the guidance of Sabinianus, a soldier of the old school, fairly held their own. These conflicts extended up to the commencement of the year. But then, as we have said, the murder of Nepos changed the entire aspect of affairs. Two other deaths made the effects of this change entirely favourable to Theodoric. In the following year, the brave Sabinianus breathed his last, and a restive horse brought the savage career of the son of Triar to a close, by flinging him against the point of a javelin suspended over his own tent.

A.D. 480.

And now the great Amal unites under his banner all the warriors of his race: he begins to perceive that the time for carrying out his most ambitious dreams has at last arrived, and instinct points to the Greek emperor as the most efficacious instrument for the purpose. We see him next at Constantinople, as if nothing had ever happened to disturb the affectionate intercourse of father and son at arms. He is welcomed with delight, made consul and minister of war; his influence daily increases, but is brought to the highest point by one of those strange seditions which seem to have been necessities of the Greek empire. A sort of pagan reaction had arisen in the East, under the auspices of an Egyptian charlatan and thaumaturgist, one Pamprepius. Encouraged by the restless intrigues of the old empress Verina, the movement assumed formidable proportions. Leontius, the candidate for the throne selected by the Heathenizers, or Hellenizers, for the names have the same import, was crowned at the church of St. Peter, at Tarsus, under the auspices of the empress Verina Augusta. Theodoric and his Goths soon disposed of the pretender; but unfortunately, one John the Scythian, had been associated with him in the military command. This gave offence—or a pretext for pretending offence—to the haughty Amal.

A.D. 484.

He suddenly abandoned the campaign, or rather, the siege of the mountain fort, in which the army was engaged, and returned to Constantinople, more arrogant and exacting in his demands than ever. Zeno was in despair, as well he might be. The Goth was insatiate, but he was playing for a great stake, and concealing a mighty ambition behind his assumed wrath. An interruption, however, now occurred, which threatened to extinguish the Empire and his own projects at the same time. The Bulgarians broke in from the north in such overwhelming force, that consternation came upon the whole Empire; not merely the outlying provinces, but Constantinople itself. The moment was propitious for Theodoric. At the head of a united army, consisting of Greeks and Goths, he encountered the invading horde in a pitched battle. It was by his personal bravery, conspicuous in all his battles, that the victory was won: he is even said to have slain the Bulgarian monarch with his own hand. At any rate, the barbarians fled back dismayed to their deserts, and Theodoric returned to Constantinople to reap the fruits of his exploits in an extraordinary increase of honour and influence. The second man in the Empire,—practically, indeed the first,—he plunged for a time into the indulgences which so splendid a position enabled him to enjoy. But the transalpine campaign of the king of Italy, which we have already recorded as occurring in the years 487 and 488, startled him from the voluptuous garden of Armida, in which his martial energy had been lulled to sleep. All the German princes were fiercely moved with indignation at Odoacer's raid over the Alps, and his treatment of the royal family of the Rugi. Frederic himself came to lay his wrongs before the champion of the Teuton races. His own Goths murmured against the son of the Amal, as sunk in the sensual pleasures of the Eastern capital, while they were starving in their settlements upon

A.D. 485.

the lower Danube. "King," said they, "while thou art fattening on the feasts of the Greeks, thy people are dying of famine. For their interests and thine own, arise and return among us; for, if left to destruction, we will ourselves go forth and seek new lands."* Roused by these reproaches, Theodoric, abandoning his banquets and his paramours, turned his face finally towards the West. His ambitious dream of wresting Italy from Odoacer again took possession of his mind, and he was convinced that at last the hour had come. He rejoined his people, and at the sight of the Gothic waggons, at the sound of the Gothic trumpet, he resumed the instincts of his race. Twice before he had offered to reconquer the throne of the West for the Eastern empire; twice he had been deluded by the hesitation or deceit of its emperor; the third time, he vowed there should be no failure; he would have recourse to the last argument of kings; his sword should win the consent which had been denied to his generous zeal. Fired by these sentiments, without cause or pretext for war, he and his warriors set forth for Constantinople, burning and slaying all before them. The citizens were aghast; and well indeed they might be; for where could they look for deliverance? The sword which had protected them against Leontius and the Bulgarians, was now no longer drawn in their behalf; it was suspended over their heads. Theodoric paused at Melantias, a short distance from the capital;—because he pitied the city, says the chronicler. It is impossible to judge of men's motives with accuracy; but if his subsequent conduct be any guide to the discovery of his policy, his reason for stopping where he did, when the city of the Eastern Cæsars was almost within his grasp, may be assumed to have arisen from his long-cherished, never-abandoned idea of succeeding in place of Odoacer to the

* Hist. Miscell. xv. 10; quoted Récits de l'Histoire Romaine, p. 426.

throne of the Cæsars of the West. He had now an opportunity of wringing from Zeno his consent, and fortifying himself by such authority as an imperial commission could give. He proposed a conference; the emperor had no alternative but to accept. Jornandes has left us a brief account of this meeting; and as he probably derived it from Cassiodorus, an eye-witness, there is no reason to distrust his narrative in the main, after making due allowance for a few flourishes, such as he frequently introduces in honour of his countrymen. "Never," says Theodoric, "have I been failing in dutiful service to you, O emperor. May it please your majesty to hear graciously the desire of my heart (*desiderium mei cordis*). Why is that Italy, so long ruled by your ancestors or predecessors,—why is that city, the very head and mistress of the world (*urbs illa caput orbis et domina*), storm-tossed by the tyranny of a chief of Rugi and Turcilingians? Send me there with my people, and at the same time set yourself free from the burden of the expense (*expensarum pondere*) in which we involve you."* The proposal was made under other circumstances than those in which Zeno had heard it heretofore. He was probably only too glad to consent; indeed, the Greek writers, desirous of repudiating the disgrace which an admission of Theodoric's irresistible pressure implied, have made the proposal emanate from Zeno himself, and their account has been generally accepted without question, by modern historians; but the whole past life of the ambitious Amal, and his future course, confirm the version of the affair which undoubtedly comes from his chancellor Cassiodorus. It was a solemn occasion, and the emperor deemed it worthy of a solemn document, or "Pragmatic," as it was called,—a term which is preserved in the chanceries of the German Cæsars. With this deliberate sanction, debated in the privy council, voted by the senate, and

* Jornandes, Reb. Get. § 57.

confirmed by the emperor, Theodoric set forth to take possession of his new inheritance, in the character of "Patrician by the emperor's appointment." That Zeno ever contemplated an entire and unconditional cession, or that Theodoric ever meant it should be anything else, is not to be imagined. Before his departure, the ceremony of investiture was performed, in presence of the Byzantine public. It consisted in the emperor's placing upon the head of the Goth the "*sacrum velamen*," or sacred veil, a square piece of purple cloth or stuff, the symbol of imperial authority. And now "the desire of the Amal's heart" was accomplished: he gathered together the fighting men, the women, the children, the cattle, the waggons and rude implements of husbandry,—in short, the whole force, and the whole property of his people, and prepared for a migration as complete and final as that in which the children of Israel went forth from the delta of the Nile to conquer the Phœnician seaboard. He did more: he summoned to his standard every Goth in distant lands, who revered the heroic blood of Amal, or had been taught to seek in the far south the mystic towers of Asgard. With the warriors of his own race, came every barbarian adventurer who was eager to sell his sword for a share in the spoils of Italy. These reinforcements, however, did not join him until a later time. For the moment, his tribe was located near the mouths of the Danube. From this spot, two paths to Italy presented themselves for his choice. It was possible for him to follow the valley of the Danube, passing onward towards its source, until he reached the valley of the Save, and then striking along this, finally to descend upon Italy by the passes of the Noric Alps or the modern Tyrol; or it was possible, again, to turn southward, and traversing Thrace, Macedonia, and Epirus, to reach Italy by the usual communication across the Adriatic Gulf. The latter route offered the advantage of turning the strong military position

which it was to be presumed Odoacer would take up, upon the eastern Alps, and so bringing the Goths nearer to Ravenna and to Rome. For the means of transit, Theodoric trusted to his previous preparations at Dyrrachium. He accordingly left the mouths of the Danube with his whole nation, numbering, it is said, more than two hundred thousand souls, and directed his march upon the latter city. There a grievous disappointment awaited him. The transports and vessels upon which he had calculated were, for some reason or other, not to be found. Not an hour was to be lost; for every hour gave strength to Odoacer and diminished his own. If he fell back, destruction stared him in the face; for an early winter was setting in, and the combined action of frost and the sword of his enemies among the Epirote and Macedonian hills would waste the strength of his army slowly away. If he remained where he was, famine would no less certainly produce the same result. Under these circumstances, he adopted the desperate expedient of plunging among the mountains of the modern Albania, and continuing his course along the wild country which forms the eastern side of the Adriatic Gulf, until he was enabled to turn the head of the gulf itself, and enter Italy in the neighbourhood of Aquileia. The sufferings of the great Ostrogoth migration upon this memorable march are described to have been, and, indeed, must have been, terrible. But the difficulties which nature and winter opposed to their progress were not so grievous as those which they encountered from their Teuton kinsmen. When nearly exhausted by cold and hunger, they came suddenly upon an army of Gepidæ, commanded by the successor of Ardaric,* and strongly posted on the banks of one of the tributaries of the Save, swollen at that period by winter rains. It was in vain to think of accommodation; for the Gepidæ were convinced that

A.D. 488.

* See Lecture IV. p. 211.

the Goths had come to rob them of their lands; and as they were surrounded on all sides by morasses, they felt confident that the half-starved bands before them would never be able to force their position. But the Goths fought with all the ferocity of despair; Theodoric, as ever, great in personal heroism, made himself the star of battle, and causing the royal standard to be unfurled over his head, called, like Henry of Navarre, upon his bravest warriors to follow where they saw it flying above the thickest of the fight.* A frightful struggle ensued; the combatants were up to their knees in mud and water, and grappled for hours as only men of the stout Teuton stock are known to do. The little river was choked with dead bodies, the morass was discoloured with blood; but at last the Goth prevailed. Theodoric gathered together his shattered bands, led them across the Julian Alps, and finally halted the whole nation, in order to recruit the strength of men and animals, in the green and beautiful meadows which girdle the course of the Isonzo. He was now at the gates of Italy, in a land of battles, and in a district where more than once the fate of the whole peninsula has been decided. But he had been long in coming, and Odoacer was prepared for his arrival, for he had employed the interval in collecting all the barbarians whom friendship or the hope of profit could attract to his banner. Rugi, Turcilingians, and Italians, with many bands of roaming adventurers, composed his heterogeneous host. Mutual jealousy and distrust, the want of common discipline and training, even the want of common language, sowed, as might have naturally been expected, the seeds of disunion and weakness, among the army which was to defend Odoacer and Italy. The Goths owed their victory to the same causes which had ena-

28th Aug., 489.

* "Press where ye see my white plume shine, amid the ranks of war,
And be your Oriflamme to day the helmet of Navarre!"
MACAULAY.

bled them to defeat the Gepidæ—their own despair and the determined valour of their king. Odoacer fell back upon Verona, doomed, it seems, to be a refuge and a *place d'armes* from the day of Bedriacum to the day of Solferino. There he reunited his army, which had been dispersed rather than defeated, and once more descended into the lists to combat for the great stake of life and empire. Theodoric had been compelled to delay for a month by the Isonzo; but once more he was ready to meet his adversary; and this time it was hoped that the conflict would be decisive. The enemy were strongly posted on the Adige, and having become fully conscious of the importance of the struggle, they had remedied many of the evils which disunion and the incongruous composition of their army had previously produced among them. The Goths were no less alive to the necessities of the occasion, and no less resolute. The great Amal, if we believe the account of the panegyrists, was armed for the combat, like a hero of mediæval days, by the hands of his mother and sister, for whom, throughout his life, he entertained a profound affection. Never, before, had his personal character so largely contributed to the success of his comrades, never did he exhibit such prodigious daring and address. Breaking through the centre of the opposing army, after almost incredible efforts, he turned, with irresistible effect, upon their right wing, and pushed it into the Adige. Odoacer had done all that was in man's power to do, but in vain. In the long roll of battles which it has been our lot to record, few, perhaps, were more obstinately contested than this. The slain are said to have been piled in heaps all over the field of battle, and fifteen years afterwards the plain of Verona was still white with their bones; for Theodoric, with a touch of his native barbarism, had forbidden the rites of burial to his enemies. Odoacer fled for refuge to Ravenna, which his rival was in no condition to besiege, and for the third time attempted to collect an army capable of taking the field.

Then ensued, between these two Teuton kings, a war of paper, proclamations, missives, recriminations, and appeals to the people, upon whom they equally intended to impose an alien yoke. In this contest, the Roman senate assumed a revived importance; for where the strength of both parties was so nearly balanced, even the feeble weight of their authority might suffice to turn the scale. But the senate, inspired with the feeling of Mercutio, was only inclined to exclaim, "A plague on both your houses." Ever since the deadly struggle in her streets between Ricimer and Anthemius, Rome had viewed, with well-grounded horror and alarm, any prospect of the repetition of that scene of blood. For this reason, she shut her gates successively upon both Nepos and Glycerius, and she was determined to shut them alike on Odoacer and Theodoric. A policy of neutrality had become her object, and a wise candidate for the Empire would have accepted such a policy at her hands. Odoacer did not. Having been refused admittance, he turned round in a spirit of indignation and vengeance, and ravaged all the surrounding country. Hitherto, of the two rivals, Italy in general had leaned to the side of the King of the Nations. In part, this may have been owing to the dislike of Greek interference and dictation, but in part also it probably arose from the feeling that it was better to endure the evils to which they were habituated, than "to fly to others which they knew not of." Ever since the days of the Athenian demagogues, it has been a sign of political wisdom to tolerate the presence of the leeches who are already saturated with the blood of the state, rather than to invite the suction of those who are still unfilled and ravenous. The Italians were fully alive to this difference between the barbarians who had so long been preying upon their vitals and the hungry Ostrogoths who as yet had scarcely tasted of confiscation and the advantages of a southern settlement. They were, then, as has been said, inclined, for this reason, to acquiesce in the continued domi-

nation of the king of Italy, and to regard with alarm the triumph of the warrior who had led these new hordes over the Alps in the offensive character of an Eastern legate and a nominee of the Byzantine court. But Odoacer, by his passion and precipitancy, spoiled all, and turned the chances which had befriended him into chances for his rival. Amid the profound disgust of his former friends, he bent his steps towards the north, and took refuge behind the morasses which encompass Ravenna. Theodoric then issued from Verona, and appeared to carry all before him. By the treachery of Tufa, a chief of the Heruli, who was guarding Milan in the interest of Odoacer, that great and already famous city threw open its gates to receive him. He now believed himself master of the whole peninsula, and listened to the bravados of Tufa, who promised, with no other help than his Heruli, to bring Odoacer in chains to his feet. Intrusted with the duty which he had solicited, Tufa turned double traitor, and went over, with all his troops, to his former master. Theodoric broke out into a terrible demonstration of his native fury, and ordered every man of the whole tribe of Heruli, wherever one could be found, to be slain upon the spot, without hesitation or mercy. Another defection increased his anger and uneasiness. Frederic, son of Fava, the Rugian, deserted from the man who appeared in Italy as the champion of the wrongs of his race, and from some inexplicable reason adopted the party of the man who had dragged his father in chains beside his chariot-wheels, and beheaded him on the Capitol. These things were a serious check to Theodoric: he felt so insecure at Milan, that he resolved to occupy the stronger military position of Pavia, and repaired thither with the whole horde of the Ostrogoths, who filled the churches, the houses, the streets and ground in the neighbourhood of the walls, with an immense number of women, children, and fighting men. It seemed a marvellous visitation to the worthy bishop Epiphanius, who was nearly reduced to

despair, as well he may have been, when all the thoroughfares, and every approach to his town had been rendered impassable by the waggons, cattle, and tents of the new comers. During the winter, Theodoric looked about him for aid, and saw that if it were to come at all, it must come from the German nations who had quartered themselves in Gaul. These were at this time the Visigoths and Burgundians. The Visigoths listened to his overtures, for it was their policy to have a co-terminous kindred power on the opposite side of the Alps. But the reasons which attracted them had the exactly opposite effect upon the Burgundians. *They* had no desire to be crushed between two kingdoms of Gothic origin close upon their frontier; they therefore invaded Italy professedly in the interest of the opposite party, but contented themselves with plundering simply in their own. Six thousand captives were carried off into Burgundian Gaul, who were ransomed for large sums during the first years of Theodoric's reign.

A.D. 489—490.

In the rapid vicissitudes of this singular warfare, the next event presented to our eyes is the siege of Milan, immediately after its evacuation by the Goths. The army of Odoacer indulged in excesses quite as cruel and licentious as if they had not considered and called themselves the Italian party. In their character of Arians, they despoiled or destroyed the churches, and vented their fury upon the few miserable Catholics who remained in the deserted town. Their triumph was of short duration, for they next attempted Pavia; but the defences were strong, the season was tempestuous, and the Ostrogoth king himself was there. Repulsed from the walls of the future capital of Gothic Italy, the "Italians" betook themselves to their usual employment of ravaging the open country. But by this time the Visigoths from Gaul had effected a junction with their brethren, close beside the intrenchments of Pavia; and Theodoric issued from its gates, once more the proud and confident

leader of a well-appointed army. On the 11th of August, these two indomitable foes found themselves once more face to face. It was this time the Adda—a river famous as the Adige in the annals of European war—which was to run red with the blood of these unwearied combatants. "Whole nations fell on either side," says a contemporary quoted by M. Thierry. Once more the Gothic swordsmen, led on by their king, cleft down all opposition. Odoacer lost the bulk of his troops, and, what was worse, the leading men of the Italian party. Ravenna was now the only refuge left; and to Ravenna he betook himself. But Theodoric followed, like avenging Fate, and camped in the famous pine-wood where Odoacer himself had halted to beleaguer Augustulus. It was

A.D. 490.

> "in the solitude
> Of the pine-forest, and the silent shore
> Which bounds Ravenna's immemorial wood,"*

that the splendid prize of Italian empire more than once was lost and won. The sanguinary battle of Easter-day, 1512, when fell De Foix, duke of Nemours, and twenty thousand men, dwells perhaps most deeply in local tradition and the general memory; but we at least cannot forget that there was determined the fate of the last of the Roman Cæsars; and there also was decided the deadly duel between his two successors of barbarian blood, with the clamour of which the world so long had rung. Odoacer made a last and gallant effort, but without success. It was an attempt to penetrate the beleaguering lines, and carry off Theodoric himself from the royal tent. That goal was nearly reached; but a night attack, when once disorganized, is generally fatal to the attacking party; and the usual difficulties in this case were aggravated by the peculiar nature of the ground. The retreat of the assailants along the causeways which led across the morass was skilfully cut off. Every-

* Don Juan, canto iii. § 105.

thing was confusion and dismay: as many were stifled in the mud and water as fell by the edge of the sword; and only a miserable remnant regained the walls. The last chance of Odoacer was gone; he was hopelessly blockaded in a spot from which egress was impossible; all communication with friends and partisans in central Italy was cut off; his influence at Rome had necessarily been reduced to nothing; his troops suffered severely from starvation, and murmured loudly and without ceasing. On the other hand, the Ostrogoths, encamped in a pestilential situation, worn out with marching, hard fighting, and scanty food, and bitterly disappointed in the brilliant hopes which had lured them across the Alps, were scarcely less discontented, or less troublesome to their leader. 27th Feb., A.D. 493. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the bishop of Ravenna, John the "Seer of Angels," should have induced both kings to accept a conference, or that the conference should have terminated in a suspension of hostilities, and a compromise between the belligerents. It was agreed that both should inhabit Ravenna upon terms of equality, and for the future make a partition of Italy between them. No one could seriously have believed in the stability of such an arrangement, though Procopius gravely records its provisions.* On the 5th of March, Theodoric made his entry into the city with great pomp. Then ensued an event which, amid all the wickedness and blood-guiltiness of that dark time, stands out in sombre colours as a monstrous instance of crime and of treachery to all the nobler instincts

* An hypothesis has been started by M. Thierry which deserves attention, and probably contains the truth. He supposes that the old form of consular government was to have been revived, and that the two kings were to govern "la péninsule indivise, chacun à tour de rôle, à la façon des anciens consuls de la république." In this case the senate would probably have recovered much of its position and influence; and we may perhaps trace the plan to the inspiration of the great men Basilius, Symmachus, and Boëthius, who had formed the "entourage" of Odoacer in his previous government.

and duties of humanity. Theodoric invited his brother monarch to a festal banquet in honour of the occasion. The tables were spread in his private garden, beneath the shade of a laurel-grove. No sooner had the guests begun to drink deeply, than each Goth arising, plunged a dagger into his neighbour's breast. Theodoric is said to have stabbed Odoacer with his own hands, and, what is worse, to have slain Odoacer's son, whose character as a hostage should have rendered him sacred even among the most barbarous times and people. Of course the Gothic historians plead the excuse of a counter-plot. But was there time for it? Could not Theodoric, at the head of his victorious warriors, have easily defied it? Was there ever a similar deed of treachery which did not shelter itself under a similar pretext?

These, and some other incidents in the career of the great Ostrogoth already recounted, must, I think, induce us to qualify the unmeasured eulogy of Gibbon. Theodoric is throughout with him "a hero alike excellent in the arts of war and government, who restored an age of peace and prosperity, and whose name still excites and deserves the attention of mankind."* With all possible admiration for the ability and success of his administration when seated upon the throne, it is not easy to forget the "by-ways and crooked practices" by which he reached it. The violence and treasons of his youth, culminating in this audacious crime, were indeed no longer seen when, surrounded by the great men who had guided his predecessor, he carried out in the West a policy which had been already commenced, and was enabled to expand it by the subtle power of his intellect and the natural energy of his character. But in his old age the barbarian reappeared, and he died swimming in the blood of the best and wisest of the last great men of Rome. What Napoleon said of the Russian of his own time, is applicable to this man, though one of the most highly-praised and

* Decline and Fall, c. 35, *ad finem.*

highly-popular monarchs of history. "His civilization was skin-deep: scratch him, and you came upon the Tartar beneath." *

We have now brought to a close our account of that unique and critical period, the last quarter of the fifth century, which saw the old-world system die out in the West, and new ones arise; which consigned Rome to the grave of buried empires, where slept Egyptian, Assyrian, Persian, Phœnician, and Macedonian dynasties; and which saw the birth of what she idly entitled "barbarian" nationalities. We shall avail ourselves of the eloquent words of M. Thierry to state the exact situation of Theodoric, Italy, and the Goths, and for the future pass lightly over the order of events, as the necessities of our plan require. "Theodoric had now no longer either colleague or enemy. Without troubling himself as to the terms of the 'Pragmatic,' or the irresolution of the Eastern emperor, he at once quitted the national costume, assumed the mantle of purple, and caused himself to be proclaimed 'king of the Romans and the Goths,' a title which was subsequently interpreted as 'king of Italy.' The fiction of the 'Roman patriciate,' under which Odoacer had governed for nearly seventeen years, vanished with the

* I had long felt dissatisfied with the hero-worship of Gibbon, so blindly repeated by others. It was, therefore, with no small pleasure that I perused the words of M. Thierry prefixed as a motto to this lecture. I cannot deny myself the satisfaction of appending his expansion of the same idea in another place:—"L'âge avait développé dans Théodoric devenu homme, les qualités seduisantes, et les vices redoutables, que Zénon entrevoyait en germe dans l'enfant. C'était toujours le même enthousiasme pour la civilisation, enté sur un fond de nature sauvage et rétive qui la repoussait, en dépit de Théodoric lui-même. C'était toujours aussi cette vive intelligence des choses morales, et ces inspirations élevées, héroïques, mêlées aux instincts les plus violents, à l'astuce, à la cruauté, à l'égoïsme impitoyable. Deux êtres coexistaient réellement dans Théodoric, et formaient ce composé bizarre sur lequel les jugements de l'histoire sont restés indécis: un Romain d'aspiration et un Barbare d'instinct, qui reparaissait par intervalles et étouffait l'autre. Attila eut plus d'entrailles que le Théodoric barbare; tandis que le Théodoric civilisé dépassa en conceptions généreuses la plupart des Romains de son temps."—*Récits de l'Histoire Romaine*, p. 362.

sovereignty of the Eastern emperors, on the last ruins of the Western empire. Not only had Rome and Italy a king, but they ceased to belong to themselves. A stranger race, subjects of the new sovereign, held them under the yoke by the right of conquest. A new era commenced in their history."*

At first, Theodoric carried himself with great severity against the party who had opposed him. Every member of it he sternly doomed to disfranchisement or exile. For a long time he was proof against all prayers for mercy, and all political considerations which recommended it. But at last he yielded to the representations of the bishops and other distinguished men, such as Cassiodorus, Symmachus, Boëthius, Liberius, and the leaders of the Italian party, who had faithfully served Odoacer as long as such service was possible, but now had transferred their allegiance to the new dynasty, and with it the weight of their authority and the wisdom of their counsels. The result upon Theodoric's part was a great, and for the time being, a complete success. All Italy, from the spurs of her great mountain-rampart to the Calabrian headlands, obeyed the Ostrogoth for her lord. The secret of this triumph, so far as Theodoric was concerned, consisted in the fact that he succeeded in a policy which Orestes and Odoacer had attempted, but in which, for different reasons, both Orestes and Odoacer had failed. To the Romans he opposed his barbarian aspect, with all its energy and power, with the vigour of a new and fresher life, unknown to the effete offspring of the decrepit empire; to the Barbarians he represented himself as a Roman, heir to all the traditions of imperial splendour, and the indescribable prestige which any civilization, even though it be corrupt, exercises over the imagination of the uncivilized man. He did not, however, neglect the ordinary precautions of newly-established monarchs, and proceeded to

* Récits de l'Histoire Romaine, p. 500.

strengthen himself on all sides by forming or consolidating connections with royal houses. His wife was a sister of Clovis, king of the Franks. His two daughters he married respectively to Alaric, king of the Visigoths, and Sigismond, king of the Burgundians; his sister became the spouse of the Vandal, his niece that of the Thuringian king. In Italy itself he formed his followers into a people,—all previous adventurers had brought with them little more than a band of brigands, or at the best an army of occupation;—and he adjusted the relations of this people with the original occupants of the soil both skilfully and well. "For the Roman the arts of peace, for the Goth the cares of war," was his favourite motto; and the policy which it represented worked with such success, that it maintained a great and powerful empire for seventy years. Relying upon the moral and military strength of his position, he assumed a sort of paternal authority over the contemporary and neighbouring potentates, to which they not ungraciously submitted. His own dominions he increased by the acquisition of Illyricum, Pannonia, Noricum, and Rhætia. The Bavari and other Teuton tribes became his tributaries, and the victorious combat of Arles gained for him from the Franks the remaining portion of Provence, the other part of which he had wrested from the Burgundians as a penalty for their animosity rather than their actual opposition in the late war. In fact, he anticipated Charlemagne, not only in the extent of his dominion, but in his ability as a governor. The genius of the Ostrogoth appears to have possessed at least as great a capacity for assimilation to civilized influences as that of any other of the barbarous races who broke up the Roman empire. The monarch himself was a signal instance of the fact; for it cannot be said that he disgraced the education which he had received at Constantinople. His territorial provisions exhibited no less wisdom than politic consideration for the vanquished. One third of the land, with all the

military posts in Italy, he assigned to his countrymen. In no other respect was any favouritism shown, for they paid the imposts upon land equally with the Italian occupants. Rural industry was studiously encouraged; the Pontine marshes were drained; iron and gold mines opened in Dalmatia and the Abruzzi; an active police by sea and land maintained the security of trade and property; and the cities acquired, says Gibbon, the "useful and splendid decorations of baths, churches, porticos, and palaces." Though an Arian, he showed no violence to the orthodox party, and established friendly relations with the popes. His toleration, remarkable in any age, would deserve to be considered marvellous in his own, could we venture to believe that it rested rather upon religious principle than indifference. Any of his subjects, Goth or Italian, were permitted to adopt either form of faith; the clergy of both communions had equal privileges; even the Jews were recognized as citizens, and received protection for their property. The men of cultivated intellect who possessed the accomplishments of the old civilization, were admitted into favour and employment. Among them, as we have already said, was the senator Cassiodorus, whose history, epitomized by Jornandes, bishop of Ravenna, furnishes the best record of this eventful age. Theodoric commissioned him on one occasion as ambassador to the Burgundian king, with these somewhat uncomplimentary credentials: "We send you this man as an envoy, that you may no longer pretend to be our equal, when you see what manner of men we have with us." Another still more famous Roman adorned his court—Boëthius, last of the long roll of illustrious names who upheld the philosophic tenets first taught beneath the plane-tree groves of Academus. For many years he enjoyed the monarch's favour; but at last, conspiracy, or the suspicion of conspiracy, confined him to a dungeon, and gave to the world, in his "Consolations," the last, and by no means the least, success-

ful effort of human philosophy to explain and to assuage the ills of life. But it is mainly by its laws that the character of any civil society is determined, and by its laws, therefore, in the main, it should be judged. The new Ostrogoth code, as promulgated in the "Edictum Theodorici," exhibited as near an approach as was possible to the unmatched models of Latin jurisprudence, and by abandoning some of the most cherished customs of barbaric life, created no little jealousy and offence among the members of the conquering race. The abolition of the Wehr-geld, or pecuniary compensation for personal injury, a principle almost of universal acceptance among the German tribes, was peculiarly unpleasing to the Goth conservatives, who remembered with regret the ancient glories of the empire of Ermanaric. Yet it cannot be doubted that it is one of the first steps towards a civilized and rightly-reasoned code of criminal law. The results, then, of Theodoric's administration were a gradual amalgamation of race and interest between the conquerors and the conquered, the general security and rapid increase of property throughout the peninsula, and the appearance of all those outward adornments which arise from and distinguish a period of national prosperity.

"Having been the first who put a stop to so many evils," says the great mediæval statesman,* "Theodoric deserves the highest praise; for, during the thirty-eight years he reigned in Italy, he brought the country to such a state of greatness, that her previous sufferings were no longer recognizable." What wonder, then, if men began to believe in the genesis of a new life for Italy and the world? Nor were they altogether deceived. It is to this era that we owe the origin or revival of many among the renowned cities of mediæval times. Then rose Venice, Ferrara, Aquileia, Chiusa, and Sienna; then also

* Machiavelli, Hist. of Florence, book i. ch. 2.

Florence, Pisa, Genoa, Bologna, and Milan, first gathered within their walls the means of wealth and the treasures of beauty which will render them illustrious through all generations of men. Then, too, the little sea-side watering-place of Parthenope began its growth to the most powerful, the most populous, and the most beautiful city of Italy. "At this time also," says Machiavelli, "not only were the names of provinces changed, but also of lakes, rivers, seas, and men; for France, Spain, and Italy are full of fresh names, wholly different from the ancient." Then, in fact, an entirely new language was developing itself among the mixed population of the peninsula, as the tongue of Virgil and Cicero melted into the melodious accents of Dante and Boccacio. What then prevented this man, with so great a genius for government, and so splendid an opportunity for its exercise, from organizing a Germanic empire, equal in extent and power to that which obeyed the sceptre of the old Roman Cæsars? or why did he fail, when Charlemagne, with a greater complication of interests to deal with, for a time at least succeeded?

The causes were mainly these; causes which we may, perhaps, suspect to be of a very permanent character and very similar, at all times, in their operation. In the first place, Theodoric was an Arian, and there was a power antagonistic to Arianism growing up already on the banks of the Tiber, stronger than the statesman's policy or the soldier's sword — the spiritual power of the Church of Rome. Elsewhere we shall endeavour to say upon this topic what our limited space will admit. At present it is enough to see that such a power was necessarily altogether incompatible with the existence of an Arian empire. And it proved mightier than its rival; for it was aided by other powers and influences, adverse to Ostrogoth domination. First among these may be reckoned the jealousy of the Byzantine Cæsars. They had precipitated the Barbarian

upon Italy, and encouraged him to its conquest, not from any affection towards the Barbarian, but from fear for themselves; and when the Barbarian had established himself in part of their ancient patrimony, and had lengthened the cords and strengthened the stakes of his rising empire, they began to perceive that his position was more formidable than ever, and they unceasingly intrigued with his personal enemies and their own Roman rival for his destruction. It was, for instance, the Greek emperor Maurice who first prominently introduced Frank chieftains into Italian politics, and Frank armies into the fields of Lombardy.* To these considerations must be added the innate and implacable impatience with which the Italian regards a foreign domination. Unable to tolerate the rule of a stranger, unable to shake it off; alternately calling for and cursing the presence of foreign dynasties; submitting to yet detesting the houses of Anjou, of Aragon, of Hohenstaufen,—the Hapsburg, the Bourbon, and the Buonaparte,—yet all the while incapable of substituting any native-born and national power, which might grow, and gather strength, and finally develop into a rival, perhaps a victor state,—from the fall of Augustulus to the field of Novara, the Italians have struggled against the chains they wore, have substituted for them other chains, have murmured, have wept, have conspired, have assassinated, have fought, have done anything but cordially and manfully unite against a common enemy. The politics of the present hour are beside our purpose, but they throw a living light upon the social causes which disappointed the earliest promise of an Italian empire, and have happily retarded, while they permitted for so many centuries, the triumph of German absolutism beyond the Alps.†

* See Paulus Diac. de Gestis Langob. iii. 17, 21, 22.

† I have left these words as they were written long ago, if for no other reason, at least to show the uncertainty of all judgments concerning Italy and the Italians. The new and splendid future which

The last days of Theodoric were haunted by the apprehension of conspiracy, and were passed in persecution. The Greek emperor Justin I. had proscribed Arianism in his dominions. Theodoric was not a bigoted Arian, but he felt this proscription as an indignity, and attempted to deprecate its severity by negotiation. Meeting with little success, he unhappily retaliated by a series of executions, in which fell the heads of the patriarch of Rome, of Symmachus, father-in-law of Boëthius, and of the great Boëthius himself. In the midst of still further preparations for the suppression of treason and orthodoxy, he was cut off by dysentery in his seventy-third year. After his death, his kingdom became involved in anarchy, and fell for a short,—and for Italy a disastrous period, into the hands of Justinian, emperor of the East, the latter part of whose reign was visited by one of those transitory gleams of splendour which occasionally flash across the destiny of falling empires. As the traveller, gazing on the long summit of some Alpine chain, while yet visible by the light of declining day, is sometimes startled by the exceeding glory of purple, rose, and gold which clothes the tinted peaks, but ere he looks again, finds that the glory is departed, and the snow-clad line of crags has resumed its spectral, death-like grey; so the labours of Justinian and the Jurists, the great exploits of Belisarius and Narses, shed a bright but evanescent splendour on the long, dull range of Byzantine annals; a splendour which soon relapses into a dreary and monotonous tale of effete institutions, dissolute princes, corrupt courtiers, and wrangling sects. The history of this period is gathered from the work of the Byzantine Procopius, secretary of Belisarius. It will amply repay perusal; for it abounds in interesting details, in striking incidents, and records of great but almost forgotten

we may trust is opening out for the whole Peninsula, must develop itself more fully, before it will be safe to indulge in any definite conclusions regarding it.

men. Gibbon has largely availed himself of the "Bellum Gothicum," and, indeed, has done little more than abridge its minutely-written narrative. We can only mention the principal incidents in their order of occurrence, that we may so be enabled to understand what follows.

The operation of the causes which we have described as tending to the overthrow of the Ostrogoth kingdom were naturally more effective in a female reign. The accession of Amalasontha, daughter of the great Theodoric, and niece of the Merovingian Clovis, awakened a host of rivalries and ambitious aims amongst the Ostrogoth nobles. The court of Constantinople, by its emissaries, sedulously fanned them into flame. Doubtless, also, the same object was pursued from Rome; at any rate, a frightful anarchy ensued, in which rapine and assassination were rife. In the mean time, victory had dawned once more upon the imperial eagles. Belisarius, the general of Justinian, in a brilliant campaign, had just concluded the conquest of the African Vandals.* Amalasontha had perished by assassination; a weak and timid monarch occupied the Gothic throne; so that the time seemed ripe for the recovery of Italy, and the glorious mission was intrusted to a man worthy to have commanded the legions of Scipio or of Cæsar. The prestige of his name enabled Belisarius to achieve his object with little serious opposition from the disorganized Ostrogoths, and to enter Rome in triumph. But the unconquered spirit of the Barbarian seemed to gather resolution from circumstances which might have inspired despair. Vitiges, whom the Ostrogoths now obeyed, called upon all the barbarian realms to resist this rehabilitation of the Empire. Rome was fiercely assailed; but as Rome proved impregnable, Milan was the prize he promised to his allies. Hordes of Franks and Germans flocked to his standard, like

A.D. 522.

A.D. 536.

* See Lecture VII.

vultures at the scent of prey. Milan fell, not before multitudes had died of famine and disease. Yet these bore but a small proportion to the victims of the devouring sword. Never had such a slaughter been known within the walls of a civilized city. Real rivers of blood ran in the streets, human bodies were piled up in huge heaps on either side. But these things only sharpened the exasperation and vengeance of their foe.

Though Belisarius was shut up for a short period within the walls of Rome by Vitiges, the arrival of reinforcements from Greece changed the entire future of the war. The Barbarian, as the Greeks still called him, was forced back into Ravenna,—his own capital, and the last stronghold of his power. Ravenna was soon entered by the

A.D. 539.

troops of the Empire, and with it fell the great kingdom of the Ostrogoths; a truly wonderful achievement, when we reflect that it was performed by Belisarius, at the head of an army which scarcely ever exceeded 20,000 men. Then begins the well-known drama of princely ingratitude and dishonoured worth which has so often been employed "to point a moral or adorn a tale." In the very flush of his victorious honours, Belisarius was recalled by the jealousy of Justinian. The Ostrogoths knew

A.D. 540.

their opportunity, and broke out into fierce rebellion. At this alarming intelligence, the great general was indeed sent back to the seat of his former triumphs; but so besotted was the mean and envious spirit that ruled the counsels of Constantinople, that no levies of men, no muniments of war, were trusted to his care. To conduct a struggle with brave and desperate foes, under such conditions, was to court certain ignominy and defeat. Belisarius demanded his recall. Totila, into

A.D. 541—544.

whose hands the Ostrogoth sceptre had fallen, was a leader every way worthy of the occasion. He displayed such valour and military skill, that his pro-

gress became every day more formidable; and it was evident that, unless speedily arrested, he would soon recover all that Belisarius had won, and perhaps consummate at last the conquest of Rome itself. But the Empire had still a man to meet the crisis. The eunuch Narses, the reigning favourite of Justinian, exhibits one among the few remarkable instances where a great latent military genius develops itself, under the pressure of necessity, in mature age. Sent to Italy at the head of a well-equipped army, to oppose the startling advance of the Gothic king, he more than rivalled the exploits of the renowned Belisarius. The Ostrogoth struggled desperately, but nothing could withstand the star of the Roman general. Five times was Rome lost and won. Totila and Teia, last of the race of Ostrogoth kings, fell as became their heroic blood, sword in hand, upon the field of battle. A.D. 553. Then occurred a singular phenomenon, — the annihilation and disappearance of a great and powerful people from the world's history. We wonder how the Etrurian name and nation were absorbed in Rome. A few sepulchral monuments, a few vases in museums, a few inscriptions which perplex the scholar, here and there a custom or tradition which survives in the story of an alien race,—this is all that remains of a people once the most polished, and, perhaps, at the era of its greatness, the most powerful in the ancient world. The same phenomenon is repeated at the fall of the great Semitic rival of Rome. The iron hand of the Republic shattered a whole civilization, as a mirror is shattered by a warrior's glove of steel. The language, the polity, the commercial empire of Carthage, have left scarce "a wreck behind." "The periplus of Hanno, a few medals, a score of verses in Plautus, and there is all that remains of the Carthaginian world."* And now once again we witness the same strange cata-

* Michelet.

strophe; the more startling, because more nearly connected with existing politics and modern times. A great people, which had organized an enlightened government, and sent 200,000 fighting-men into the field of battle, is annihilated and forgotten. A wretched remnant, transported by Narses to Constantinople, were soon absorbed in the miserable proletariat of a metropolitan city. The rest fell by the sword, or were gradually amalgamated with the mixed population of the peninsula. The Visigoth kingdom in Gaul and Spain, which had been overshadowed by the glories of the great Theodoric, emerges into independent renown, and takes up the traditions of the Gothic name. In the annals of Europe the Ostrogoth is heard of no more: his place was to be occupied by a race which has exercised a more permanent and pacific influence upon the character of European civilization.

It was, however, in no peaceful guise that the Lombards first appeared upon the stage of history. Four hundred years before this era, we hear of Langobardi between the Elbe and the Oder, as a tribe distinguished for their valour and the formidable long lance, from which they probably derived their name. Tacitus tells us that their numbers were few, but that their courage and hardihood rendered them conspicuous among all other tribes of Teutonic descent.* The other etymology, "Long-beards," though deduced from an ancient tradition, which Mr. Kingsley has rendered popular,† and sanctioned by the authority of Gibbon, I cannot believe to be correct. There seems no reason why so common an appendage as the beard, where all wore beards, should have been selected as a distinctive national mark; nor is it so easy to understand why this particular tribe should have had any advantages in the growth of such hirsute decoration beyond their neighbours. But any pecu-

* "Langobardos paucitas nobilitat."—*De Moribus Germ.* c. 40.

† Song in Hypatia.

liarity in the fashion of a weapon is at once seized upon among warlike races, and converted into an appellative. Many persons living can recollect that their English auxiliaries were termed "Blue Flints" by the peasants of Vendée, from the unusual colour of the flints in their musket-locks. But "Long-beards" or "Long-spears," they soon worked their way, like their predecessors, to the Danube. Here they encountered the Gepidæ, who, as we may remember, after having taken a leading part in the defeat and dispersion of the Huns in the great battle of Nêtad,* had settled in the plains of Upper Hungary and on the Transylvanian hills. For thirty years these two powerful tribes continued a contest in which both sides sought the assistance of the Greek emperor, and both were purposely encouraged in their rivalry with a view to their common destruction. The beauty of a Gepid princess, and the advent of a new race from Central Asia, determined the issue of the strife. The charms of Rosamond, daughter of Cunimund, king of the Gepidæ, had attracted a host of noble and powerful suitors for her hand. But it was the fate of this barbarian Helen to be the ruin of her family and people. Alboin, the young and heroic monarch of the rival Lombard race, refused as a legitimate candidate for her favour, accomplished by force and stratagem the possession of her person. The Gepidæ were as resolutely bent upon her recovery, as the subjects of Agamemnon and Menelaus who fought for the divine daughter of Leda beneath the walls of Troy. They were aided, too, by imperialist troops; and Alboin and his Lombards, despite the most valorous efforts, were compelled to relinquish their prize. Their situation became most perilous, and they looked anxiously abroad for assistance. By a remarkable coincidence, assistance was at hand. We have already had occasion to record the circumstance. Far away in Central Asia, at the foot of the Altaic chain, 2,000 miles beyond the Caspian, the

* Lecture IV.

old causes of migratory movement had been at work: a quarrel had taken place among some of the races of Turanian stock, and the Turks, now first heard of in history, chased their kinsmen the Ouar-Khouni, or pretended Avars, to the foot of the Caucasus. The latter appeared before the Greek emperor, and made the usual offer of submission to his authority, coupled with the promise to extirpate his enemies, wheresoever they might be found; but they claimed as the reward of their services the payment of annual subsidies and the grant of lands.* Justinian, now an old man, had not the courage to refuse their friendship; perhaps he hoped to find in them a counterpoise to the growing power of his barbarian neighbours. He had an idea of granting them a settlement in Pannonia; but they were strong enough to help themselves. As Gibbon says, "they boldly advanced into the heart of Poland and Germany, violating the law of nations, and abusing the rights of victory. Before ten years had elapsed, their tents were on the Danube and the Elbe." In these fierce and adventurous Asiatics, Alboin saw the means of salvation and revenge. He invoked their powerful aid against the Gepidæ. The request was instantly granted, but upon conditions that plainly showed how great was their ambition and consciousness of power. The united armies fell upon the Gepidæ, who fought with their hereditary courage, but fought in vain against such overwhelming odds. Cunimund fell upon the field of battle. The ferocious and revengeful victor caused his skull to be fashioned into a drinking-cup, from which, on festal days, he and his warriors quaffed large draughts of the wine with which they celebrated their feats of arms. Some historians speak of this as a monstrous invention, an unparalleled refinement of cruelty and brutality. It was probably a mere compliance with a barbarous usage imported from Asiatic Scythia into Europe, familiar to all who have read of the banquets of Odin's

A.D. 566.

* Lecture IV. p. 213.

warriors and remember the Runic legends of the North. In this case it became the cause of a memorable and horrible tragedy. But not as yet. This decisive victory at once established Alboin as the greatest leader of the age. In the days of Charlemagne, the songs of the German peasant still told of his beauty, his heroic qualities, and the resistless vigour of his sword. His renown crossed the Alps, and fell, with a foreboding sound, upon the startled ears of the Italians, now experienced in the varied miseries of invasion. The changes and chances of despotic rule had once more left them defenceless. For fifteen years after his annihilation of the Ostrogoth, Narses had governed Italy in the name of the emperor, as exarch of Ravenna. His administration is accused of having been rapacious and oppressive. This may well have been the case; for in the political morality of the times, the obligations which he had conferred would in some degree excuse the exactions in which he indulged. But they were made a plea for his recall, and that recall was accompanied by an insult which it was not in human nature to forgive. "Bid him leave to men the exercise of arms, and resume his proper place, distaff in hand, among the women of the palace," was the insolent message of the Byzantine empress to the man who had saved Italy. "Tell her, I will spin her such a thread as she shall not easily unravel," was the answer. If it be true that, stung to the quick by his unworthy treatment, Narses made the signal to the Lombard king, which summoned him to the crests of the Alps, and told him that Italy lay below at the mercy of his arms,—bitterly was the prophecy fulfilled. Never again from those well-woven toils could Greek authority in the West shake itself free. The treachery of Narses, confidently asserted by some writers, is disputed or entirely disbelieved by others. What remains certain is, that Narses was superseded in his office of exarch by Longinus, and that soon after, all the bold and adventurous spirits of the barbarian

world, Saxons, Lombards, and Franks, gathered beneath the banner of Alboin, and descended upon helpless Italy in an irresistible torrent of armed men. The description given by historians of that famous and terrible march, terrible even after so many predecessors of similar character, recalls the language of the poet:

A.D. 568.

> "Amazement in his van with flight combined,
> With sorrow's faded form and solitude behind."

The inhabitants knew their weakness too well to attempt resistance, and this time, without laborious sieges or "decisive battles," the whole centre of the peninsula, from the hills of Trent to the neighbourhood of Rome, passed submissively beneath the yoke of the foreigner. One city alone made a stand. The military genius of the Ostrogoth had discerned the excellent position of Pavia upon the Ticino, and surrounded it with defences, strong enough to arrest the victorious Lombard in his otherwise triumphant progress. Infuriated by the obstacle, Alboin swore that within those doomed walls, neither age nor sex should escape the sword. Despair lent strength to the citizens: for three whole years they sustained the unequal contest; but were at last compelled by famine to capitulate. The Barbarian, baring his sword, ruthlessly prepared to fulfil his bloody vow. But superstition achieved what mercy had been unable to effect. As he entered the gate, the horse of Alboin stumbled, and, fearing the evil omen, he consented to sheathe his revengeful steel. Life was spared, but nothing more. The city pleased the taste of the victor; he made it his royal residence; and thus, for many years, Pavia succeeded to the position formerly occupied by Rome, and then by Ravenna, as metropolis of the whole peninsula. The fate of the fortunate chief who won with his sword these royal realms, and wore for a brief season the perilous honours of the Lombard crown, forms one of those terrible tragedies of

real life which surpass the fictitious crimes and sorrows of the stage, or furnish it with horrors, such as the unaided imagination of the dramatist would have been unable to conceive. Alboin, inflamed by wine and song, in a fit of Bersœker frenzy, like that which sometimes inspired the Vikings of the North, bade his attendants fill with wine the skull of Cunimund, and bear the cup to his own wife, the daughter of the murdered man, the lovely Lombard queen, who graced the wild banquet with her presence. Rosamond durst not refuse the pledge, but, as she drank, resolved, in her indignant soul, on the instant destruction of the tyrant. Seducing or seduced, she employed her charms to secure what was now the sacred object of revenge. Himilchis, the royal chamberlain, and another Lombard lord, were drawn into a conspiracy to slay their master. Alboin, oppressed with wine, and perfidiously lulled to rest by the caresses of his queen, had at midday fallen asleep in his own chamber. Rosamond herself unbarred the door, the assassins rushed in with their weapons drawn; but the redoubted hero of so many victorious fights sprang to his feet, and seized his sword. The traitress had glued it to the sheath. With nothing but a footstool, the undaunted victim made a desperate resistance; but he was cut down at last, and Rosamond gazed with triumph at the bleeding corse. It was not given to her to exult long in the joys of vengeance. The Lombards seemed to submit, but were in reality ready to rise against the adultress at the first opportunity. She speedily became alarmed. Accompanied by her trusty Gepid guards, who had followed her from her father's halls, and loaded with the plundered treasures of the palace, she fled in company with her paramour to Ravenna. There, her beauty, or reputed wealth, attracted the Greek exarch. He made a proposal for her hand, to which she readily assented; but Himilchis formed an insuperable obstacle,

28th June, A.D. 573.

and of Himilchis, accordingly, they determined to get rid. False to her lover, as to her husband, Rosamond prepared a potent poison, which she presented to him upon quitting the bath. The unfortunate man, before he had finished the draught, detected a flavour in the liquid, or an expression in the Queen's eyes, which experience perhaps had taught him to connect with deeds of treachery and blood. At the point of the dagger he forced her to finish the potion, and both expired within a few hours. How much of Italian history is foreshadowed in this dark tale of the poniard and the bowl! How often has the fate of Alboin and Rosamond been reproduced in that land of passion and intrigue!

It was probably owing to the internal weakness and anarchy which these dire events foreboded or introduced, that the kingdom of the Lombards, despite their acknowledged valour, and the very considerable genius for legislation which their laws display, never attained to the same external development as that of Theodoric. It never, for instance, comprised Sicily within its limits, or, with perhaps one exception, the transalpine provinces; nor could it lay claim to more than two-thirds of Italy. The extremity of the peninsula was indeed ruled by Lombard dukes; but they asserted at a very early period their independence of the court of Pavia. Gibbon includes within the circle of Lombard dominion the *terra firma* of what was once the Venetian republic, the Tyrol, the Milanese, Piedmont, the coast of Genoa, Mantua, Parma, and Modena, and a large portion of the States of the Church. There were not, however, wanting external causes which assisted the action of domestic anarchy in checking the expansion of this formidable power. The Byzantines still retained the exarchate, and several cities on the coast. The little republic of Venice was safe among the Adriatic waves, and offered an excellent *pied à terre* for an aggressive force. The Frank battalions were incessantly surging over the Alps, and menacing the

safety of the capital itself. The ecclesiastical governor of Rome opposed the Lombard, whom he hated as an emissary of Satan, by intriguing with his enemies, and the exercise of that religious awe with which he so well knew how to impress barbarian minds. A haughty Lombard sovereign had spurred his steed into the sea which rolls between Europe and the opposite continent, and smiting with the renowned Lombard spear a pillar erected for the purpose amid its waves, had cried, "Behold the limits of Lombard power." But though the Calabrian coast was ruled by Lombard dukes, they soon discovered that the intervention of the Roman territory placed them beyond the reach of a king who governed from a town of Northern Italy, and those turbulent vassals became the most troublesome antagonists of their lords. Among the long array of "treasons, stratagems, and spoils" which Lombard annals display, there is little to delay us until we arrive at the fatal period when their confused and hostile relations with the Papal power, occasioned by the ambitious designs of the rival potentates upon the exarchate, brought the Franks over the Alps, and imposed the yoke of a master upon both parties in the person of a new emperor of the West. Alboin was succeeded by Clepho, or Clef, a man of ferocious spirit, who ruled his subjects with a rod of iron. He soon became intolerable to a proud nobility, who deemed themselves the equals of their monarch in the field of battle, and not inferior in birth, or scarcely in social station at other times. His assassination was followed by a period of anarchy, in which six-and-thirty dukes did what was right in their own eyes, solely with a view to their several interests, and the people suffered frightfully in the feuds which occurred between them. But it soon became manifest, even to the rude political perceptions of Lombard dukes, quickened as they were by the dread of Byzantine intrigue and Frank intervention, that disunion was social death. After an

A.D. 573.

interval of ten terrible years, they admitted the claims of Autharis, son of Clepho, who had been a minor at his father's death. In engaging to follow his banner to the war, they agreed to a surrender of half their existing revenue, for the purpose of furnishing a body of troops who should be at the king's disposal. In return for this important concession, their duchies were made independent and hereditary, subject to forfeiture only for felony, and revertible to the crown when no male successor of full age should assert his claim. Thus, about the year 584, was inaugurated the feudal system in Southern Europe, and historians point to this convention of Lombard chieftains as its origin and earliest type. But it should be remembered that the convention itself was little else than a necessary consequence of the act of Alboin, when he effected the partition of Italy among his followers. And Alboin, in all probability, imitated the policy pursued by Longinus the Exarch, who, it may be remembered, had replaced Narses at Ravenna. To the destruction of that system of centralization which had hitherto given its greatness to the metropolitan city, this man appointed governors for the several divisions of territory which appeared to him of sufficient importance to demand the presence of such an officer. In this arrangement no special favour was conferred upon the capital, and thus Rome,—which had already been politically eclipsed by Ravenna,—as soon as the Lombard established his court at Pavia, was compelled to accept the third place among the cities of the Italian peninsula. But be this as it may, during the two hundred years of Lombard domination in Italy, the most prominent features of feudalism were strikingly displayed. Few sovereigns escaped a violent death; the powers of the crown were altogether incompetent to curb the nobility, and the nobles, possessing almost uncontrolled power in the "Placita Regni," or great councils of the realm, first made the laws themselves, and then seve-

A.D. 584.

rally administered them among their neighbours and dependents. No check, therefore, could be placed upon cruelty and exaction, upon their mutual internecine feuds, and their open resistance to the supreme authority. The greatest evil was the presence of the Franks, who had been provoked to retaliate the perpetual inroads made by the Lombard dukes upon Gaul. Alarmed by the danger their violence and anarchy had created, they sought its remedy in "the union, secrecy, and vigour" of regal government.* Autharis may be excused for not foreseeing all the difficulties of his position; he may be excused, if at the moment when, in all a monarch's pride, he saw so many stout Lombard spears around his throne, and heard the shout of allegiance from their warrior lords, he indulged in high dreams of the destiny of that race which Alboin had so often led to victory. That he did entertain some such hope, may perhaps be inferred from the fact, that he assumed the gentile name of the royal race of Constantine, as if, under the title of Flavius, he expected to rival the *rôle* of Theodoric, or revive the glories of the ancient empire. Nor was he personally unworthy of these exalted aims. He enlarged the dominions which he had received; he baffled his Byzantine enemies; he three several times rolled back the tide of Frank invasion; and maintained some degree of domestic order in the duchies. But his principal exploits were in the territory of the Church, which he swept with fire and sword, awakening that passionate hatred towards his race which finds vent in the language of Gregory the Great. In September, A.D. 590, he died, after a brief but brilliant reign. The occasion was critical, for the Franks were in the land; and, had not the invading army been consumed by pestilence, they would have proved on this occasion strong enough to remain there. Theodolinda, the youthful

A.D. 590.

* Gibbon.

widow of the deceased monarch, was eminently beloved by Lombard chiefs. They agreed to accept as their king the man upon whom she should bestow her hand. Her choice fell upon a kinsman, Agilulf, duke of Turin. Freed from all apprehension on the part of the Franks, he turned upon the exarch, who had been audacious enough to become the assailant, and for the purpose of self-protection, had withdrawn the garrison from Rome, over which he still exercised a semblance of authority in the name of the Greek emperor. This determined the direction of Agilulf's movements: he was soon at the gates of Rome. Then occurred one of the strangest events of this strange age. The Lombards were, as we have before said, Arians. Theodolinda, a Bavarian by birth, had been brought up in the orthodox faith, and it had ever retained a strong hold upon her affections. Of this fact Gregory took advantage. He addressed to the Lombard queen a series of letters, still preserved, which doubtless were well calculated to influence and overawe the barbarian mind, but which it requires a very large charity and a most favourable consideration of the circumstances to redeem from the charge of the wildest extravagance. They, however, had their effect upon Theodolinda, and perhaps aided her in converting her husband from the Arian heresy. Certain it is, that Agilulf soon professed himself a faithful son of the Church, restored the treasures which he had plundered, and reinstated the bishops whom he had deposed. The gratitude of Gregory was manifested in the gift of the far-famed iron crown, so called from an inserted circlet of the metal, fabricated, as it was said, from the nails of the true cross. After all the strange vicissitudes of its fortune, Austria still clings, as though with the tenacity of a dying grasp, to this memorable relic, the sign and symbol of Italian sovereignty. The stranger is surprised to see, that, like other crowns, it consists of gold and gems, and deems, perhaps, that the

traditional name reflects the iron domination which is the doom of that passionate and restless race. Despite of this gift, the language of Gregory towards the Lombards does not improve, nor do the relations between the two parties become more amicable and undisturbed. To him they are still "the most wicked of men;" for them he is a hopeless obstacle to their ambition, a stumbling-block, and rock of political offence. Agilulf died, after regulating the affairs of his kingdom upon an orthodox model. A.D. 615.

It was also an orthodox king, Rotharis, who at a later period gave to the Lombards their first written code: his example was followed by many of his successors, who both modified and increased his laws. They deserve our most careful study, for, without acquaintance with them, it is impossible to form any just idea of the national character of the people, or the social condition of the age. What is true of the Lombards is, of course, true of the Goths, Burgundians, Franks, and all the Teuton races who overthrew the old world, and built up another in its place. But, except by the professed student of history, such a task cannot easily be performed. In a summary of this sort it cannot even be attempted; but the reader may be benefited even by the information, that Dean Milman's great work upon Latin Christianity contains an admirable chapter upon the subject, well calculated to satisfy any ordinary requirements. A.D. 643.

Arianism was finally extinguished by Grimwald, duke of Benevento, a bold and vigorous usurper, who drove the Franks back behind the Alps, and crushed the feeble efforts of the Greek emperor Constans II. to regain his Italian patrimony. Stormy times followed: quarrels with the emperors; quarrels with the kings of the Franks; quarrels with the popes, and intestine quarrels, worse than all the rest. In June, 712, commenced a reign remarkable for the character and ability of the monarch, but still more remarkable for the series of A.D. 662. A.D. 712.

events, "the beginning of the end," to which it gave birth. Luitprand, of Bavarian descent, ascended the throne, aspiring to the character of both legislator and conqueror. He fulfilled them both; but his legislation came too late, and his conquests led to the dissolution of his kingdom. Still, he is highly extolled by Paul. Diaconus as "wise in council, a fearer of God, and friend of peace;" merciful, chaste, temperate, brave; no philosopher, but the father of his people, and reformer of the laws."*

To understand ,however, the true character of the transactions which followed, it will be necessary to turn for a moment to the condition of the Christian Church in its temporal relations with the State. However great may have been the growth of its power and influence under Byzantine and Ostrogoth rule in Italy, it was not until the establishment of a Lombard kingdom, from which it became distinguished by strong lines of demarcation, that we can discern, in the occupants of the Roman see, the exercise, or perhaps the idea, of a really independent authority. This, however, very rapidly developed under the conduct of the able man who occupied the chair of St. Peter some thirty years after the establishment of the Lombard kingdom. Gregory, surnamed by a grateful posterity "the Great," was one of those men who stamp the impress of their character upon their own generation, and leave a trace of their actions through all time. He was one of those men so admirably described by Milman, who, "if not great in relation to the true intellectual, moral, and spiritual dignity of man, are yet great in relation to the state and necessities of their age, engrossed by the powerful and dominant principles of their time, and bringing to the advancement of those principles surpassing energies of character, inflexible resolution, the full conviction of the wisdom, justice, and holiness of their cause, and in religious affairs, of the direct

A.D. 590.

* De Gestis Langobar. vi. 58.

and undeniable sanction of God."* This is an admirable portraiture of Gregory, of what he was, of his motives for what he did, and of the means by which he did it. Ascetic and fanatical, from his monkish antecedents, he swayed the imaginations of men, who, in those troubled times, were more than ever disposed to regard superior sanctity with awe; lavish, even to profusion, in his self-denying charity, he conciliated their affections by the personal sacrifices which alleviated their wants; able, eloquent, and politic, he dominated over their intelligence by his superior genius for affairs. Never yielding a point, never abandoning a purpose, he subdued their wills by his iron resolution, and the onward, unswerving course of his ambition. Discerning the favourable conditions by which he was surrounded, he availed himself of them to the uttermost. To some extent he was aided in his dealing with foreign potentates by the prestige which surrounded the holy office since the days when Leo went forth in his pontifical robes to meet the barbarian invader. All the world, and especially all the Christian world, looked with wonder and reverence upon that unarmed hero before whose fearless front the terrible Alaric, and still more terrible Attila and Genseric, had recoiled. Little marvel if, in that rude age, the imaginations of men succumbed before a power which had proved itself mightier than the sword, even when wielded by such awful hands. Gregory found occasion to imitate the example of his predecessor; but he united to the moral influence so acquired a more subtle and successful dominion over the princes whom he rebuked. The vague elements of a power which was of necessity unstable and ill-defined, because reposing upon a moral rather than a material basis, he converted into a solid and consistent whole, upon which he impressed a palpable form. In his hands, truly says Hallam, all imperfect or disputed claims first assumed a positive shape. He took

* Vol. i. p. 401.

care that they should never lose it in his own lifetime; nor have they lost it since. The Papacy, as we know it, undoubtedly springs from Gregory the Great. Such was the man who inaugurated a policy which enabled the bishops of Rome to dispute with the Lombard kings the question of Italian supremacy. But before this question could be settled, there was another which demanded solution. Few points of common interest existed between these rivals. The Lombard king chafed at the impediment offered by the Roman territory to the progress of his arms towards the South, and the chastisement of his rebel vassals at Spoleto and Beneventum. He showed his irritation; perhaps attempted to carry out his ambitious and aggressive designs, by frequent ravages of the open country and expeditions to the very gates of Rome. The smoke of burning towns and villages, seen by priests and citizens from leaguered walls, inspired them with a bitter hatred of the Lombard name, which they did not hesitate to express with a vehemence of language which sometimes startles the reader's calmness. In the correspondence and other ecclesiastical documents of the day, the Lombards are always "the children of perdition" and "the most abominably wicked of human beings;" yet there was one "existing fact" which affected the prospects and the feelings of both parties very much in the same way—the exarchate of Ravenna. So long as they could point to the presence of a third power in Italy, claiming a traditional authority over both, they were equally anxious for its expulsion. The Greek exarchs formed a standing obstacle to either the temporal or the spiritual domination of any other potentate in Italy, not merely from the fact that they maintained a court at Ravenna, but much more from the associations which such a viceroyalty contributed to keep alive. While the Byzantine Cæsar retained a representative in the peninsula, the shadow of the Empire still projected itself into the West; in an unreal and distorted shape it is true; but

such shadows often affect the imagination more powerfully than a closer view of the substance itself. And therefore a stronger motive than the lust of territorial acquisition, although this motive was, doubtless, very powerfully called into action, induced Lombard sovereigns and Roman pontiffs to seize the first favourable opportunity for shaking off the incubus of imperial traditions and foreign rule. Yet it may be doubted whether the Roman world would ever have endured to see the Barbarian in possession of what the Greek had lost, or to have taken any steps which might lead to such a result, had not a revolution arisen in Constantinople, which for ever alienated the affections of the Western Church from its sister of the East, and ultimately led to hopeless rupture between them.

A man of barbarian birth, an Isaurian adventurer, had been raised to the imperial purple in one of those tumultuous revolutions which had now become so common in the disorganized empire of Constantine. Leo was a soldier, a tried and brave one, but he chose to become a theologian also, and, like most theologians reared in camps, he entertained strong notions on the subject of discipline and the necessity of implicit obedience to the commander-in-chief. The decoration of the Christian churches by paintings and images, originating in the uneradicated influences of heathen taste, and greatly promoted by the example of Helena, the mother of the first Christian emperor, had by this time been exaggerated into an abuse easily capable of producing most serious evils. Leo was determined to crush these evils before they acquired invincible strength. His motives it is not now easy to ascertain. Perhaps the growth of such a cult interfered with his political projects or some details of his military system. Yet why, after all, may we not ascribe his conduct to its most obvious cause, a conscientious conviction, originating in the early associations of a faith which had been nurtured among rude

A.D. 717.

regions and in a life of hardships, remote from the pomp and splendour of the metropolitan worship? But whatever may have been the purity of his motives, his measures cannot escape the charge of injudicious haste. He addressed himself to the task with the promptitude of his profession. No allowance was made for existing interests; no tenderness shown for tastes which, if mistaken, still could not have been the offspring of vice or malignity; no account was taken of the hold possessed by a practice eminently adapted to human weakness, upon the affections of an impressible and fiery race. And, indeed, it would be incorrect to describe the attachment of the Italians to image-worship as a mere blind or sentimental devotion to a picturesque practice, ratified by authority, and hallowed by increased length of time. It was much more than this; for it had entered into the very heart of their religion, and had become the real exciting cause of perhaps the greater part of their religious emotions and acts. Sanctity attached to the actual material representation of the mother of God, and to that of the saint or martyr whom the peasant, and persons much higher in social position than the peasant, adored in prayer; and this sanctity in their fast-rooted instincts no philosophy might question, no symbolism dilute. With what feelings, then, must they have regarded the employment of physical force, the actual imposition of sacrilegious hands upon the holy thing! Another circumstance added in no slight degree to the general horror: Islamism had by this time arisen in the East; the Saracens were sweeping round and through the outlying provinces of the Byzantine empire; their scaling-ladders were only hurled from the battlements of Constantinople by the skill and resolute valour of Leo himself, and showers of that formidable compound known to later ages as Greek fire. With the Saracen, therefore, in all men's minds, were associated ideas

A.D. 726.

A.D. 676.

of hatred and alarm; for the Saracen proclaimed the message of his faith—the immateriality of the Godhead, not to be shadowed forth in symbol, sign, or image—with a most furious fanaticism, with devouring fire and steel. No relic of ancient art, or offering of later piety, escaped the devastating zeal of these sanguinary enthusiasts. The Koran forbids the imitation of any living thing by a material image. The gorgeous tracery of the Alhambra contains no pictured shape of beast or bird or fish, or "human face divine." We may easily, therefore, imagine the destruction wrought by their arms among the richly-decorated shrines of the Christian Church, and the repugnance excited by the half-naked zealots who traversed the world proclaiming the terrible alternative: "Believe or die—the Koran or the sword." When, then, the emissaries of Leo entered upon a not dissimilar course in the West, it is scarce surprising that the bitterest animosity should have been aroused, and their master assailed with the epithets of Atheist, Jew, Demon, and Mohammedan. An imperial edict had decreed the instant destruction of all pictures and images in Constantinople. The edict was angrily received, and blood was shed in the streets, in the churches, and beside the statues of the saints. Behind the spears of his barbarian body-guard, and among his degenerate Byzantine subjects, the emperor might safely venture on such a measure, but in Italy the popular mind was stirred to its profoundest depths. The exarch had received orders to carry out the edict by force in the Western provinces, and his emissaries addressed themselves to the task with the zeal of the soldiers of De Montfort or the Ironsides of Cromwell. In every province, in every town, resistance was esteemed a sacred duty. Italy rose as a single man in defence of its beloved images: everywhere was tumult and insurrection. Even the children in the schools joined in the tumult, and, says Pope Gregory II., "mocked at the

heretic emperor, and would have thrown their slates at his head, had he ventured to appear within the doors."* The pope adroitly threw himself into the front of the battle, as champion of the national cause, and by his energetic opposition contrived to satisfy at one and the same time the demands of orthodoxy, patriotism, spiritual ambition, and territorial aggrandisement.

A.D. 712. Luitprand, when he ascended the Lombard throne, succeeded to those relations with the Roman pontiffs which, despite the affectionate interlude of the Iron Crown, never ripened into anything like political friendship. But now that Rome was in open insurrection against the Iconoclast Leo, the politic Lombard deemed that he might calculate upon her non-interference with his ambitious designs upon the Exarchate. He accordingly advanced upon Ravenna. Nor was the Greek emperor in a condition to send any effectual assistance. The Bulgarians pressed him hard upon the northern frontier. These were the fiercest and most brutal of all the wild tribes who had poured from the Asiatic steppes across the boundaries of Europe, and for many years they afforded ample occupation to the imperial troops. But east and south, in all the more distant provinces, seas, and islands, were gathering the legions of a still more formidable foe. The Saracens, as we have already said, had drawn a fiery girdle round their destined victims, the circumference of which was daily contracting, until it seemed that the strength of the Empire must collapse and wither in its embrace. It is not surprising, therefore, that fleets and armies were not forthcoming for the defence of a distant dependency, the fate of which could exercise no material influence upon that desperate battle for life or death in which the Byzantines were engaged. When Luitprand reached Ravenna, he found the

* Epist. Greg. II. ad Leonem, in Baronius, vol. ix.

citizens prepared for defence. But no sooner had he proclaimed himself champion of the images, than a large party attached themselves to his cause, and he speedily became master of the town, and of the whole Pentapolis, or district of the "five cities." Gregory II. is by some supposed to have encouraged the attempt. He seems at least to have viewed it for a time with complacency; but no sooner was it accomplished, than he recurred to the traditional distrust of the Lombard name and policy. He looked abroad for aid, and discovered it in a quarter to which, from thenceforth for many centuries, the eyes of the world were directed. The dawn of Venetian glory emerges like a star from the darkness of the eighth century, when Orso, the first Doge or Duke, appears at the head of a fleet, as the powerful ally who recovered Ravenna for a Greek emperor and a Roman pontiff. Yet the emperor seems to have shown but little gratitude for the co-operation of Gregory, if that co-operation was sufficiently disinterested to deserve the name; for we soon find the imperial and papal factions in internecine feud throughout the Pentapolis, and the politic Lombard professing profound reverence for, and united in alliance with the pope. But fresh quarrels arise; the ally once more appears at the gates of the sacred city in the character of a conqueror, and Gregory goes forth, like his predecessors, to appal a barbarian army by the awful presence of the Head of the Church. Luitprand submitted, either from awe or policy, prostrated himself before the pontiff's chair, and offered his crown at the tomb of the apostle. Gregory II. died in 731. His successor bore the same name, and inherited the same policy. The complicated and unintelligible relations with the Lombards are again renewed. But this time a new actor is introduced upon the scene, who speedily assumes the most important part in the great drama of Italian history. Affairs had at last reached their crisis, the pope felt that Lombard do-

A.D. 728.

A.D. 731.

mination no longer loomed in the distance; it had been retarded for a time, but was systematically advancing, even through and by the very circumstances which had been devised to arrest its progress. Within a few years, a barbarian kingdom would be once more established in Italy, as extensive as that of Theodoric, and far more fatal to the aspiration for temporal power and territorial dominion which had now assumed the character of a fixed idea in the mind of the spiritual head of the Church. If the Exarchate should be absorbed, and the rebel dukes of Southern Italy reduced to allegiance, it was seen that the court of Pavia would soon tower to the full proportions of Imperialism; that the papacy would dwindle to the dimensions of a Lombard bishopric, and Rome itself be reduced to the position of a municipal town. The necessity, therefore, of succour from a foreign power had become imperative; and there was but one arm in Europe which could wield the weapon of deliverance. A future lecture will be devoted to the gradual development of the Frankish power on the lower Rhine and in Gaul. We can only now refer to the fact, that just at this period its glories had culminated in the ever-memorable triumph won by Charles Martel in the field of Tours, where he appeared as the champion of Christendom, against the Saracen invaders. All eyes were directed to the man who had saved society, and to his faithful Franks, who, unlike their barbarian brethren, had from the first adopted the orthodox belief. The pontiff believed that the hour had come, and with it the man—the victorious and formidable Frank. The Gallic Church, too, had attained a splendid prosperity, which even that of Italy could not rival. Its abbeys, monasteries, monuments, saints, martyrs, relics, bishops; its sanctity, its enormous wealth, and the brilliant abilities of its leading teachers, might well attract the eyes of the Romans in their struggle for the supremacy

A.D. 732.

of their own Church, and induce them to seek the aid of that same warrior race beneath whose protection their Transalpine sister had learned to rest. It now seems agreed that some time before the dissolution of the Byzantine power in Italy, in the days of Gregory II., secret negotiations had been begun for the sake of obtaining the aid of the Franks against the Lombards; but the policy, or the necessities, of Gregory III. cast aside all concealment. With an "exceeding bitter cry" he bemoans the desperate fortunes of the Church, and calls upon Charles Martel to cross the Alps, and win for Christ's people another deliverance, as glorious and as needful as the famous fight of Tourraine. He proffers to the Frank king the title of Roman Consul; he tries to bribe him with filings from the chains of the apostle Peter and the keys of his tomb. The Barbarian hesitated. We may believe that he dimly descried in these magnificent offers the opening of that path by which his great descendant climbed to the height of more than Cæsarean power. But the Lombards had crossed the Alps at his call; had stood by his side and struck with him on the field of Tours, and elsewhere.* Something of gratitude was due for this. Nor was an internecine enmity with the strongest and most compact power of kindred race then existing in the European world to be lightly undertaken. He had a quarrel, too, on his hands with the Church of Gaul, arising from a somewhat arbitrary notion of his right to an ample share in the property which his sword had saved; and he was occupied with that spoliation which, despite of his victory over the infidel, and his vested rights in the keys of Peter's sepulchre and the filings of Peter's chains, has gained for him the curses of Catholic tradition, and exhibited him, in the immortal verse of the great Catholic poet, as writhing amid sulphurous flames in the

* See Paulus Diaconus, de Gestis Langob. vi. 53.

lowest abyss of hell.* Charles Martel, therefore, though very courteous and conciliatory, made no decided movement, marched no armies over the Alps in answer to this appeal. It is, however, certain that he accepted the title of "Patrician" from the Roman government; and as this title had hitherto been borne by the officers of the Eastern emperor, it is not unreasonable to conjecture that there existed in his mind the germs of the policy which was so effectually developed by his successors. And

A.D. 741. now the most prominent actors in this great drama pass away from the scene; — Charles Martel and Gregory both die in 741; three years after Luitprand is no more; but the relative positions of the

A.D. 744. parties remain the same. The Greek emperor, ever since the failure of his last attempt at invasion, and the destruction of his fleet by the Adriatic

A.D. 733. storms, has practically abandoned the Exarchate, and it lies in a defenceless state, ready to become the prey of the power which shall assume the first place in Italy. There is another Lombard monarch on the throne, as eager for the prize as his predecessor, and far less capable of being restrained by spiritual terrors. There is another pope in Peter's chair, who calls as loudly as ever on the Franks; and another Frank is leader of his race, who is bound to the pope by the strongest ties of gratitude for the extraordinary consecration which has constituted him a king, and dethroned the Merovingian family in favour of his own. Pepin le Bref has

A.D. 751. been raised by his rude warriors on the buckler at Soissons, and, despite his treasonous deposition of the Merovingian line, has received the holy oil of anointing from

* The story originated in the Visio S. Eucherii, supposed to be a forgery of Abp. Hincmar, in which the saint beheld Charles Martel in the flames of hell. Unfortunately it has been proved that Eucherius died first.

the hands of an archbishop.* This mixed ceremony, half pagan, half Christian, is eminently characteristic of the era and the man. His brother and co-heir to the royal office, Carloman, eldest son of Charles Martel, is in the monastery of Monte Casino, whither he has been followed by another discrowned king,—Rachis, the Lombard, whom Pope Zacharias has persuaded to abandon the regal purple for the cowl.

A.D. 752. But he has done an evil thing for the interests of Rome. The bold and ambitious Astolphus vaults into the vacant seat, and Zacharias dies, leaving to his successor Stephen an adversary very different from the monarchs whom he himself had cajoled or overawed. Astolphus is instantly on the way to Ravenna. He is in possession of it before an opposition can be organized; and nothing now remains but the old expedient of embassies and entreaties, with mingled caresses and commands. They succeed for the moment; but in four months' time, Astolphus reappears as the exasperated and inexorable enemy of the pope: he menaces Rome with instant assault, if the citizens do not ransom their lives by a heavy poll-tax, levied on them man by man. But it was not for nothing that the Church had made the Carlovingians a race of kings, and compromised the sacred character of her authority by the solemn sanction of a usurper. Stephen took the bold resolution of passing the Alps, and appealing in person to Pepin le Bref. It affords a strange, but instructive picture of the times, and of the sanctity which had gradually attached to the person of the Romish bishop, to find him traversing safely those very territories upon which he was about to let loose the most formidable army in Europe. The pope and Pepin met at Pontyon; their conference was of the most edifying character. French writers describe the prostrations and supplications of the ecclesiastics clothed in sackcloth and sprinkled with ashes. The Italians are no

* See Lecture VIII.

less positive that the monarch kissed the ground before the pontiff's feet, and walked bareheaded beside his palfrey. But the result was satisfactory, however brought about. Pepin promised to cross the Alps, and instantly made preparations to do so. Astolphus attempted to avert the danger by a singular and, as it seems, a somewhat impolitic expedient. He induced Carloman to quit his monastic retreat at Monte Casino, and sent him to plead the Lombard cause at the Frank court. The presence of one who had so lately shared, and might again rival his authority, was anything but pleasing to the proud and ambitious Pepin. The Lombard effected nothing by his scheme; but his unfortunate emissary was delivered over as an apostate monk to the ecclesiastical authority, and was imprisoned in the cloister at Vienne, where he almost immediately died. Meanwhile Pepin and Pope Stephen collected and concentrated their forces. The latter appears to have striven with some earnestness to avert a war which he believed would be of a most sanguinary character. More than once he tried the effect of negotiation; but Astolphus treated menaces and embassies with equal contempt. The event by no means justified his confidence. A change appears to have come over the Lombard character. Intestine sedition, and the enervating influence of a warmer climate, had deteriorated the rude energies of that race whom Tacitus distinguishes for valour and hardihood amid their Teutonic brethren, and who, two hundred years before, descended, under the banners of Alboin, like sons of the giants, upon the fair cities and fertile plains of Italy, determined to make them the booty of their bow and spear. But now they could offer no effectual resistance to men who brought with them from behind the mountains a fresher importation of the same old heroic blood. The Frankish battleaxe soon thundered at the gates of Pavia, and Astolphus immediately gave way. He engaged, under solemn

A.D. 754.

pledges, to restore to Rome all the places he had captured. The dreaded Franks retired as they had come; but no sooner were they beyond the Alps, than the perfidious Lombard, calculating upon the difficulty of again re-organizing among Barbarians an expedition which had just terminated without any splendid feat or prize of arms, believing also that the impatient spirit of the Frank king would at last be wearied by the importunities of Stephen, and trusting perhaps, in the main, to the chapter of accidents, refused to fulfil the conditions of the treaty, and, advancing to the very gates of Rome, threatened to take the town by assault, if the sacred person of the pontiff were not delivered into his hands. The consternation of Stephen may be imagined. The fear of personal indignity, if not of personal danger, quickened his apprehension for the fate of the patrimony of Peter, and in the most moving strain, not unmingled with spiritual menace, he implored by letter his beloved son, the king of the Franks, to come with all all speed to the succour of the Church. The zeal of the Frank was too cold or his movements too slow for so grave a crisis. It was necessary to quicken them, and the pope had recourse to a singular expedient,—nothing less than the old "Deus ex machinâ" of heathen tragedy. An epistle from Peter himself was despatched to the lingering Pepin. History does not say whether this notable letter was an autograph, or the work of an amanuensis; but those accustomed to the style of the Vatican would probably recognize the "fine Roman hand" for which its missives are so remarkable. The Carlovingian family owed too many obligations to the successors of Peter, and Pepin was too faithful and too politic a son of the Church, to neglect his apostolic correspondent. With immense rapidity, he appeared once more in Lombardy, and, as on the former occasion, the Lombards showed themselves utterly unable to resist him. Astolphus was not

only compelled to surrender his designs upon Rome, and to promise respect for the future to the Head of the Christian Church, but he was also stripped of his recent acquisitions from the Empire. These became the property of the Frank king by right of conquest. He did not hesitate as to their disposal. The Byzantine emperor put in a feeble claim for his undoubted rights by the mouth of an ambassador; but Pepin was a great deal too pious to listen to an earthly potentate when Peter himself had spoken. For Peter's honour alone had he drawn the sword, and none but Peter should receive the spoil. Accordingly, he at once bestowed upon the pope and the "Holy Roman Republic"—for so the document ran—all the Pentapolis and the exarchate of Ravenna. The commissioners of the pope, in the name of the republic, passed through the whole territory, receiving the allegiance of the inhabitants and the keys of the cities. To revive old traditions and to strengthen a new claim, it was deemed advisable to re-christen the district with the old imperial name. Henceforth it is known by the now world-famous name of Romagna, and this, with the March of Ancona, constituted the first real temporal sovereignty of the Roman pontiffs.* Later historians, enlightened by the course of events, have not failed to insist upon the immense importance of the revolution effected by the celebrated "dotation of Pepin." Thus, says Milman,† "the successor as he was declared of the fisherman of the Galilean lake, the apostle of him whose kingdom is not of this world, became a temporal sovereign." Ranke fixes definitively on the same period as the critical moment in the history of the papacy, and, con-

* On the extent of the cession, see Gibbon, ch. xlv. He adds in a note: "The papal advocates may justly claim the valley or morass of Commachio as part of the exarchate; but the ambition of including Modena, Reggio, Parma, and Placentia, has darkened a geographical question somewhat doubtful and obscure."

† Vol. iv. p. 11.

sequently, as critical also in the history of all the countries with which it maintained relations; or, in other words, in the early history of modern Europe.* "He caused the keys of the conquered towns to be placed on the altar of St. Peter, and in this act he laid the foundation of the whole temporal power of the popes." And Gibbon also, though perhaps this particular aspect of the question was not so immediately present to his mind, has clearly seen and stated, that the reciprocal obligations of the popes and the dynasty of the Carlovingian kings, constitute the link between ancient and modern, between civil and ecclesiastical history. To us who are enabled or compelled to contemplate the results of that spiritual imperialism inaugurated by Gregory and completed by Hildebrand, this introduction of a purely secular element into the constitution of the Church, appears an unqualified evil. The growth of mere worldly interests, as implied in the exercise of a temporal dominion, in no respect distinguishable from the kingdoms of the world, might, *à priori*, have been judged incompatible with the character of a society professing, as the kingdom of God, purely spiritual interests. History has abundantly verified the truth of such a judgment, and the change of Peter's patrimony from "farms and houses" into "cities and provinces," has naturally been regarded as the one great cause, humanly speaking, of all the corruptions in the doctrine and practice of the Church of Rome, of the arrogance and ambition exhibited by her sovereign pontiffs, and of her unwarrantable interference in the political affairs of Europe. Even as we write, the matter assumes an importance which renders it perhaps the great question of the age, the question which involves the future religious relations of Christendom. Regarded by the light of subsequent experience, the dotation of the Exarchate must be felt and described as an extraordinary evil,

* Ranke, Hist. of the Popes, ch. i. 2.

a perennial fountain of future difficulties and woes; yet we shall find those writers who have looked at the history of the Church from the most strictly Protestant stand-point, very generally ascribing to a providential arrangement the position and influence exercised by the see of Rome upon the western nations, as they were emerging from barbarism and gradually consolidating themselves into the existing types of civilized government. And there can be little doubt but that these authors are right. The Church not only modified the internal policy, but in a great measure directed the external relations of these young nationalities, partly by the influence of her teaching, and partly by offering a common point of association, through which they might communicate, and establish a sort of federative society. The discordant elements of barbarian life could never have been agglutinated into a common Christendom without the action of a central power, whose general interest coincided with the advancement of civilization and the preservation of peace. The profound genius of Leibnitz, it is well known, recognized the fact, and he went so far as to recommend that a sort of temporal jurisdiction over Christian princes should be accorded to the pope, for the purpose of securing these and similar objects. But it may well be doubted whether any such scheme as that sanctioned by the authority of Leibnitz, would have been suited to the era of Lombard domination and Carlovingian kings. A merely moral authority, resting upon no material support, would have been too shadowy and intangible a power to be respected, perhaps to be comprehended, by a rude and violent age, living under the law of the sword. Had a power of the sort ever been bold enough to assert, it would assuredly never have been able to maintain, such a supremacy as the occasion required. They, therefore, who admit the beneficial action of Roman ecclesiastical policy upon those troubled times, must also be prepared to admit that, without the dotation of Pepin, it could

not have acquired sufficient consistency and force for the effectual discharge of its mission. It is not for us to say whether the difficulties of the situation have passed away with the age, or whether the expedient of Villa-Franca—"a federation of the Italian nationalities, under the presidency of his Holiness the Pope"—is a more hopeful scheme in the nineteenth century than it would have been in the eighth.

The Greek emperor appears to have occasioned very little trouble to the new lord of the Romagna. Indeed, the method by which the old traditional allegiance to the court of Constantinople was repudiated or transferred to the ruler of the Franks, and the exact period when its claims were finally abandoned, is one of the most obscure questions connected with these important transactions. Rome certainly continued to Pepin, as to Charles Martel, the title of Patrician, which had previously been borne by the envoys of the Empire. Money was coined in his name in Italy, and an oath of fidelity taken to him by clergy and people. From the time of the dotation, moreover, the popes no longer dated their bulls by the reigns of the Eastern emperors, yet Hallam, speaking of this period, has observed,* "A good deal of obscurity rests over the internal government of Rome for nearly fifty years, but there is some reason to believe that the nominal sovereignty of the Greek emperors was not entirely abrogated." It is not necessary to dwell upon a matter of no practical importance. A few writers have considered that it adds to the imperial glory of Charlemagne to believe that he succeeded the Byzantine Cæsars as emperor of the West, and have for this purpose imagined a formal cession by Constantine V. The pretended document was, doubtless, a forgery; but from the day when Stephen vainly appealed to Constantine Copronymus for aid against Astolphus, the

* Hallam, vol. i. p. 11.

star of Empire began to "glitter in the west," and to the west all eyes were turned, never more to revert to the shores of the Bosphorus.

Pepin died in 768. He had divided his dominions between his two sons, Charles and Carloman. To the former, the consentient voice of ages has assigned the name of "Great," and he is known to history as Charlemagne. There seems, however, reasonable cause to doubt whether this be an adaptation from the Latin *Carolus magnus*, or from the Teutonic *Karl-mann*, "strong-man." We must leave to the rival critics of France and Germany, a question so gravely affecting their respective nationalities. In a succeeding lecture, we shall have to regard this great man in his character as emperor of Europe and reviver of civilization. At present we have merely to speak of his relations to Italy. At his accession, the Lombard rule in Italy, though greatly enfeebled, had not as yet expired. Desiderius, duke of Tuscany, had been elevated to the throne of Pavia the year after the dotation, and he appears to have deserved the elevation. While Charlemagne had the rivalry of his brother or his brother's children to contend with, he was sensible of the advantages afforded by such an alliance. For this purpose, apparently, he united himself in marriage with Desiderata, daughter of the Lombard king. At Rome, the political horizon was dark with the shadow of these events. The union of her protector with her ancient and hereditary foe, seemed to menace destruction to her newly-acquired dignities and her independence. But ere the pope had time to organize the means of defence, by supplication or intrigue, the dark hour had passed, and all peril from the Lombard spear was about to be dissipated for ever. Charlemagne had been relieved of all possible rivalry from his brother's children, and proceeded to dispose of his Lombard wife. The unhappy princess was repudiated by the Frank with circumstances of great indignity, for the purpose of marrying a royal lady

A.D. 768.

A.D. 757.

of Suabian descent, and returned upon her father's hands. Whether this was a determination to pick a quarrel, an act of passion, policy, or caprice, it was fraught with grave consequences for the world. Desiderius, in his anger, welcomed to Pavia the widow and children of the deceased Carloman, for the purpose, we may naturally suppose, of fostering the seeds of rebellion against the usurpation of his son-in-law. He had the insanity at the same time to quarrel with Rome. Some years before, he had visited that city to deliver the pope from the trammels of a domestic sedition, and was accordingly for a brief period in good odour at the Seat of Sanctity. But now another pope, Hadrian I., of Roman origin, was sitting in Peter's seat. Desiderius, blinded by hatred to his son-in-law, pressed upon him the duty of anointing the children of Carloman to a throne which their uncle had disgraced by his crimes. Hadrian was a great deal too far-sighted to hesitate in a choice between the Lombard and the Frank: he declared for the latter. Desiderius fell furiously upon his territory with an army, sacked his cities, and came, like his predecessors, to settle his quarrel at the gates of the capital. Hadrian was a soldier as well as a priest. He strengthened his defences, barricaded his gates, and sent forthwith for Charlemagne, whom the Lombard supposed to be involved inextricably in a Saxon war. But the Frankish monarch was prepared for a contingency which he doubtless foresaw, and in all probability desired. He dispatched his ambassadors before him, but followed close upon their steps. His army appeared in two divisions, at the foot of the passes of Mont Cenis and the Great St. Bernard. The Lombards, under their king, made a gallant, and for the moment, a successful defence in the Alpine defiles. But the population was in general adverse to the conquering race in occupation, and favoured the invader. Desiderius was speedily shut up in Pavia. The town was strong, and had to be approached

in regular form. Charles availed himself of the delay, to visit Rome. Like his father, he had received the honourable title of Patrician, and in this capacity he might claim to be the civil head of the Roman republic. He was received with almost extravagant demonstrations of joy and loyalty; the whole population came forth to meet him beyond the walls. All the ceremonies formerly observed in honour of a visit from the emperor's representatives, were scrupulously repeated. The crosses were carried to the gates; the pontiff stood upon the steps of St. Peter's to welcome his approach. Charles behaved with edifying piety, and exhibited the most profound respect for the sacred shrine of Peter and the person of his representative. What was of still greater importance, he ratified the donation of Pepin, and gave a solemn significance to the act, by placing the legal document upon the altar of the apostle. The document has unfortunately been lost, and it is not easy to recover or conjecture its exact terms. "It is said," writes Dean Milman, "to have comprehended the whole of Italy, the exarchate of Ravenna, from Istria to the frontiers of Naples, including the island of Corsica. The nature of the papal tenure and authority is still more difficult to define. Was it the absolute alienation of the whole temporal power to the pope? In what consisted the sovereignty still claimed and exercised by Charlemagne over the whole of Italy, even over Rome itself?"* What an immense increase of interest attaches to these questions, even since they were penned by the accomplished historian of Latin Christianity.

Meantime the course of events proceeded rapidly in the north. The Franks were everywhere irresistible and triumphant. Despite of its defences, Pavia fell. Desiderius retired into a monastery; for, in that age, the cowl was the

* Hist. Lat. Christ., vol. ii. p. 148.

common covering for discrowned and dishonoured brows. Adelchis, his gallant son, fled to Constantinople, and reappeared fitfully upon the scene, as commander of a Greek fleet in the Italian waters, and the originator of a vain conspiracy against the overwhelming power of the Frank. Charles assumed the title of "King of Lombardy," and passed beyond the Alps, to mingle in stormier, but not in more eventful scenes; and the old heroic dynasty of the Lango-bardi, the boldest of the Teuton stock, after a domination of two hundred years, was extinguished, never more to rise again. But not so the memory of their race and name. Those magnificent plains, which stretch from the Alpine spurs to the banks of the Po, commencing in mountain-terraces bright with the verdure of the vine, watered by noble rivers breaking from the blue bosom of lovely lakes, which yearly attract the pilgrimage of the world, and sweeping far away towards the south in fields rich with the olive, the mulberry, and cereals of every class, may become the spoil of the Austrian, the French, or the Sardinian sword, but they bear, and probably will for ever bear, the Lombard name. The Lombard genius for art has stamped an enduring record of itself in ecclesiastical architecture; yet it is perhaps for capabilities of another class, that the nation has most conspicuously merited the eulogium of an ancient poet.* The shop of the patient worker, who, in troubled times, moulded the precious metals into fabrics of ornament or use, naturally became the depository of these metals themselves; and thus the ingenious Lombard artificer in gold and silver developed by degrees into the mediæval banker. In the greatest city of the world, the "Street of the Lombard" debouches upon that magnificent edifice where the wealthiest

* Grunterus, secretary to the emperor Frederic I., thus describes the Lombards:—

> "Gens astuta, sagax, prudens, industria, solers,
> Provida consilio, legum jurisque perita."

people of modern times have enshrined their national treasure, and recalls by its name, by its situation, and by the splendid establishments which it contains, the Lombard genius for commerce, and our own obligation to it as the organizer of a system which alone has rendered possible those vast monetary operations that cover the whole globe with a network of human interests and obligations. But it is not only the wealthier son of traffic who preserves a remembrance of the Lombard. The poor man knows him too; and the three balls of gold, the symbols of a useful, though abused institution, connect the memory of an heroic and victorious race, with the humble associations of the peasant and the artisan.

A.D. 781.

But we must hasten on to the closing scene of the century, a scene which may well be described as closing also the first epoch of post-Christian history. On three different occasions, Charlemagne subsequently visited Italy. The first was for the baptism of his son, another Pepin, for whom he destined a title dear to the ambition of French rulers, — "the king of Italy." Again he was summoned to suppress a Lombard conspiracy, headed by the powerful duke of Benevento, and supported by Byzantine intrigue; and again the faithful son of the Church unsheathed his sword in her behalf. But it was unnecessary to strike. The Lombard dared not encounter that terrible weapon, and was glad to obtain peace by an annual tribute of 7,000 pieces of gold. Upon his death, which almost immediately followed, Charlemagne appointed Grimwald, his son, to succeed his father at Benevento.

A.D. 787.

It is a curious proof of the growth of Frankish influence, and the gradually increasing prestige associated with the name, that we find Grimwald abandoning his national customs and costume, and adopting the usages of the Franks. Charlemagne was recalled from Italy by a revolt in his German provinces, and by an invasion

of the Huns. For more than ten years the Saxon and the Saracen found ample employment for his arms; but in the mean time Hadrian I., the great and A.D. 795. able pontiff who had administered the destinies of Rome beneath Frank auspices, was called to his account. The next election fell upon Leo III. It was for him a perilous elevation; for the nephews of the late pope, instigated by personal ambition, organized against him a plot, which they carried out with more than Italian ferocity. The time of a solemn procession was chosen for executing their scheme. Assailed by armed men, the head of the Church of Christendom was hurled from his horse, cruelly beaten, mutilated, and nearly deprived of sight. The occasion was worthy of the august interference of Charlemagne. He appeared at Rome, not only to avenge, but to sit in judgment upon the life and actions of the pope. Leo, by a public declaration, which was so arranged as to assume a voluntary appearance, established his own innocence, confounded his accusers, and secured the favour of Charlemagne. And now an eventful moment was at hand. It was the festival of our Lord's Nativity, A.D. 800. the Christmas-day of the eight hundredth year after the birth at Bethlehem. The pope, the dignitaries of the Church and the Holy Republic, the populace of Rome, the great Frank himself, with his gorgeous court and glittering array of "Paladins and peers," thronged the magnificent edifice which had arisen over the mortal remains of the Galilean fisherman. The grandeur of the occasion and the solemnities of the mass had wrought up the audience to the highest pitch of religious exaltation, when the pope, amid the profound silence of that vast assemblage, advanced to Charlemagne, and placed upon his brow a crown of gold, hailing him, at the same time, as Cæsar Augustus, Emperor of the West! "God grant life and victory to the great and pacific emperor." The thunder of a thousand voices ratified

an act which announced to Europe that a new era had arisen in her history. The star of empire, which had long glittered in the western horizon, towered upward to its zenith, and a new Order of things was born into the world.

The coronation of Charlemagne proclaimed, with unmistakable significance, that the old traditions of Cæsarean empire and universal dominion were at last revived, but revived in a way which gave assurance to the world that in their ancient form they could never again return. It proclaimed that Rome had broken for ever with Byzantium, that the city of Romulus and Peter had shaken herself free from the city of Constantine, and that the phantom of empire, which, amid an *entourage* of women, eunuchs, and slaves, still dared to mutter the old magic words, once all-powerful over the minds of men, was now at last to learn that the spell was broken, the sceptre departed, and the kingdom divided among the heroic races of the West. But it also proclaimed, that the seat of empire was henceforth not to be sought beside the Tiber, or within the charmed precincts of historic Italy; but beyond the Alps, beyond the Rhine, among regions and nationalities which Rome had never known. And yet the ceremonial contained a presage which might have consoled the Roman, as he gazed upon the skirts of that departing glory. It shadowed forth the growth of a new power, impalpable and indefinite, yet for that very reason more mighty than its predecessor,—a power which should one day set its foot upon the necks of Kaisers and of Kings, and gather once more the nations of the earth within the walls of Rome, as to the capital of the world. How much of all this was foreseen by the actors in that memorable pageant? how much of it designed, or even understood? Did Leo act from gratitude or policy; with a dim prescience of the future, or under a blind impulse, originating and terminating in the present? Was Charlemagne sincere when he declared that, had he known the pope's purpose, he would

never have set foot within the church? or did he, with deep and far-seeing policy, desire the mysterious prestige of consecration by Peter's successor in Peter's seat? Had he any real idea of its possible influence upon the destiny of his successors, any prophetic vision of the gigantic claims which boundless ambition and boundless spiritual pride would one day justify by this eventful precedent? When he accepted the homage of the grateful and compliant Leo, could he have imagined that, ere the dawning century had passed away, men would assume his functions and sit in his apostolic chair, whom the future historian might truly describe as "imperiously dictating to sovereigns, ruling, or attempting to rule, the higher clergy in foreign countries with a despotic sway, mingling in the political revolutions of Europe, awarding crowns and adjudging kingly inheritances"? Or did Leo, on his part, anticipate the intimate relations between the spiritual rulers of Rome and the Cæsars of barbarian blood, to which this recognition of their great progenitor was hereafter to give rise? Could he have believed that foreign princes from beyond the Alps, a Henry or an Otho, would dominate in the sanctuary of Peter over the Vicar of Christ and the Head of the Christian Church? Nay, stranger still, could he have dreamed that "the aspiring blood of Italy would sink into the ground," and the great office of the Church itself would soar to its most towering height, and assume its most colossal proportions in the hands of pontiffs of an alien name and race? Who can answer these questions? Who can arrange the historical phenomena of that strangely agitated age in definite plans of policy, or draw them out into one consistent scheme, intelligible in its motives, its developments, and its results? Or who can describe, with anything like accuracy and truth, the real character of the rapidly-alternating relations between the temporal and spiritual powers which followed upon this memorable meeting of

Roman pontiff and Teutonic king? It would be as easy to arrest the fantastic cloud-shapes in the summer sky, or the fleeting shadows on the mountain's side, and arrange them in the definite forms of geometrical science. At any rate, the attempt, if it be practicable, must be left to the professed historian. For a time, the history of Italy, as of all other European kingdoms, centres in Charlemagne. We must turn, after a brief but necessary digression, to the fortunes of the race, dynasty, and country with which he is more immediately connected.

LECTURE VII.

THE SLAVES—THE VANDALS.

AFRICA *loquitur*:—"Venio pars tertia mundi,
Infelix felice uno, famula satus olim,
Hic prædo et dominis extinctis, barbara dudum
Sceptra tenet tellure mea, penitusque fugata
Nobilitate furens, quod non est, non amat hospes.
O, Latii sopite vigor! tua mœnia ridet
Insidiis cessisse suis; non concutis hastam?
Non pro me vel capta doles? tua nempe putantur
Surgere fata malis, et celsior esse ruina."

SIDON. APOLL., *Pan. Maj.* v. 54—62.

SYNOPSIS.—The SLAVES: their origin and connection with the Goths, Huns, and Avars.—Revolt under Samo.—Wars with the Franks; their final distribution.—The VANDALS: whether Slaves or Teutons?—Their movements until settled in Pannonia; join the great invasion of Gaul, A.D. 406; pass over into Spain; receive a grant of lands from Honorius: their prosperity.—The Goths are sent by the emperor to eject them; they maintain their ground, and become nearly masters of Spain.—Their migration into Africa; the reasons for it.—Genseric king; his history and character.—War in the Roman province.—Genseric makes himself master of Carthage.—Account of the City; its wealth, luxury, and crime.—Continued war with the Western empire.—Picture of a Vandal foray.—Capture of Rome by Genseric; great moral effect of it.—Genseric defeats the invasion of Majorian; supports Olybrius as a candidate for the Empire; destroys the great Byzantine armada; dies: provisions as to his successor.—Huneric king.—Strife between Catholics and Arians.—Gundamund and Trasamund.—Quarrel with the Ostrogoths of Italy.—Hilderic, grandson of Genseric, king; deposed by Gelimer.—Dispute with Justinian; he determines to invade Africa.—Belisarius appointed to the command.—Skilful conduct of the expedition.—Carthage taken.—Gelimer in flight pursued by John the Armenian; death of the latter.—Gelimer captured after a long siege; brought in triumph to Constantinople.—Utter dispersion of the Vandals.

HITHERTO we have dwelt upon the fortunes of the Turanian and Teutonic tribes who dashed up against the Roman

empire, and by the force of that impact precipitated its fall. To the Teutonic peoples we shall presently recur. This would, however, seem the proper place—if our plan is to be symmetrically arranged—for saying what the subject requires concerning the third great primary family of the human race — the Slaves. Could we agree with those writers who believe that to this belong the two Vandal tribes, we should be enabled to flatter ourselves that, in these lectures, the just literary proportions between the different divisions of the subject had been rigorously maintained, and the Slaves, like the Turanians, would have the advantage of a separate chapter devoted to themselves. For those who still retain this opiuion, our work will possess the merit of superior symmetry. We ourselves can only regard the once favourite hypothesis of the Slavonian origin of the Vandals, as indicating the place where the few and uninteresting remarks, which the ancestors of the former demand from us, may be most appropriately introduced.

To the Slavic races, it is said,—perhaps in some quarters it is believed,—belongs the Future of the world. The historian who declines the prophetic office, can only venture to declare that they have not possessed its Past. During the period of which we write,—from the fall of the Cæsars to the death of Charlemagne,—they neither established themselves permanently in any part of the old Roman empire like the Vandals, nor, like the Huns, created a rival empire of their own. It has not, therefore, been found necessary to treat of them in a distinct lecture. Their national characteristics, their relations with the Avars and the Franks, the settlement of some of their tribes in the modern Servia and Croatia, have already been briefly mentioned. What, therefore, we are concerned to know of them may be very briefly recapitulated. Their first settlement in Europe is referred to the immemorial period when Central Asia poured the fathers of the human race upon the Western world. Apparently less vigorous,

enterprising, and brave than the cognate races of Celt and Teuton, they everywhere gave way before the impact of these later comers, and closed again like a fluid after the passage of a solid body. The Goths—the strongest and most active of the great Teutonic family—first displaced them in their own passage to the South, and exercised dominion over such of their scattered tribes as came within reach of the wide-spread empire of Ermanaric. But the Goths, we have seen, were themselves displaced by the Huns, and forced for a time to submit to the horsemen of Attila. The Slaves easily accustomed themselves to new servitude under a Turanian instead of a Teutonic empire, and followed the banner of the Scourge of God almost to the walls of Rome, and the great battle of the nations at Châlons.

When the battle of Nêtad broke up the Hunnic empire and dissolved the dynasty of Attila, the Slaves, in the wild confusion which followed, regained such precarious independence as they had formerly enjoyed. But it was an independence which placed them at the mercy of the first comer with arms in his hands. For nearly a hundred years, we hear very little of them. Then they are discovered in the train of the Bulgarians, one of the wildest and most brutal hordes that ever broke in upon the empire of the East. The particular inroad in which the Slaves participated was signalized by the last triumph of the veteran Belisarius, whose military glory shot upwards with a broader and a brighter flame as it was on the point of expiring for ever. In the graphic account which Gibbon has given of this remarkable combat, the fighting seems to have been nearly confined to the Bulgarians. The Slaves, however, shared in all the consequences of the defeat, and relapsed into their original obscurity, until we hear of their submission to the Avars when the latter entered Europe, as detailed in the fourth lecture.

A.D. 453.

Their miserable condition under Avar thraldom, and their successful revolt, headed by Samo the Frank, have
A.D. 623. been described in the same place. The empire which he established was more coherent and powerful than its antecedents would have induced us to suppose. Feeling its way towards the West, it came into collision with the Franks; or, more probably, the Merovingian monarchs, inspired by jealousy of its rising power, gladly availed themselves of an opportunity to assail it. Some Frank
A.D. 631. merchants travelling for the sake of commerce in the Slavic territory, were robbed of their goods, and killed;—no unusual event, it may be imagined, in those wild countries and wild times. It was, however, enough to form the basis of a respectable quarrel, and Dagobert, king of the Franks, availed himself of it without delay. He dispatched an ambassador to Samo at once. Samo, with a cunning which he seems to have borrowed from his adopted people, long baffled the envoy's attempts to obtain an audience. But this man was as great a master of the strange statecraft of the times as Samo himself, and ultimately effected his purpose by a singular ruse.

Having disguised himself and his attendants in the Slavic dress, he penetrated into the royal presence, and at once began to pour forth the tale of his wrongs, and his demands for redress. He went so far as to allege that Samo, and by consequence his subjects, owed allegiance to the Frank monarch as their master. Samo answered calmly, that his territory should be considered as Dagobert's property, and his people subjects of the Frank crown, if only Dagobert would remain at peace. This very humble answer had no effect upon the foregone conclusion. The ambassador was probably instructed to provoke war, at any cost. "There can be no alliance," he savagely said, "between a Christian people, the servants of the true God, and dogs like you." "If," replied Samo, "ye are the servants of God and we are

his dogs, so long as ye act against his will, we have permission to rend you."

In the war which followed, Dagobert, though aided by the Lombards and Alemanni, did not obtain any signal success. The Slaves maintained their independence for the time, and the divided state of his own kingdom compelled Dagobert to relinquish his angry or ambitious designs against them. But they were without the genius for government or empire. When Samo died, no native-born leader arose to consolidate their scattered tribes and give them a national life. We have already noticed the settlement of some of them, Croats and Serbs, in Mœsia and Dalmatia, which occurred about this time. It was a success; but again they owed it to a foreigner,—Heraclius, the Greek emperor. Their own confederation hung very loosely together, and seems to have accepted, without any important resistance, their ancient position of dependence upon their neighbours. Some of them fell under the dominion of the Lombard kings, who were anxious to strengthen themselves upon the Adriatic. The Czekhs of Bohemia, the most important offshoot of the race, eventually became tributaries of Charlemagne. Many Slavic tribes on the borders of the Baltic rose to some consideration, from their commerce and extensive marts at Arkona, in Rugen, Kiel, and Novgorod. They long continued pagans. Indeed, the conversion of their southern brethren in Moravia and Bohemia was the work of a later period than that of which we treat. It was not until fifty years after the death of Charlemagne, that the Greek emperor, Michael I., dispatched two men of piety, learning, and a thoroughly missionary spirit,—Cyril, whose real name was Constantine, and Methodius,—into these wild districts, for the purpose of reclaiming the inhabitants from heathenism. These men performed the same office for the Slavic language and literature which Ulphilas did for the Gothic

A.D. 640.

German. By a translation of the Scriptures, they formally constructed, if they did not altogether found, the existing Slavonian dialect. These were, however, events of a period subsequent to that which we have fixed for our present goal. They find mention here only, lest it should appear that we had altogether forgotten the destinies of one among the three great barbaric races which came into collision with the Roman empire during its decline and fall. What may be their future destiny it is no part of our task to determine. Where they have risen to importance, strange to say, it has been under an alien dynasty. In Mecklenburg alone, a Slavic family has retained its place among the royal families of Europe. The descendants of Pribislas, who became a Christian in the twelfth century, were made dukes by Charles IV., in 1348; and though the duchy has been divided, their children's children are dukes even now.

A.D. 863.

Having dismissed the Slaves, we turn to the history of a race once considered to have been the most remarkable scion of the Slavic stock—the Vandals. It has been found desirable to anticipate, to a certain extent, the course of events in relating the history of the Huns, for the sake of treating that subject consecutively as a whole. And in the case of the Huns this course was justifiable; because the empire which they established, though vast in its extent, was brief in its duration, entirely independent of local ties, and unconnected with later local associations. The other barbarian nationalities took root in European countries, which have been the birthplace of other dynasties, more or less connected with their immigration. Thus the Ostrogoths and Lombards belong to Italy and the history of Italy; the Angles and Saxons to Britain; the Burgundians, the Visigoths, and the Franks, to Gaul; the Sueves, the Alani, and the Visigoths to Spain. One other race, however, established themselves beyond the limits in which is comprised

the States-system of modern Europe — the Vandali, or Vandals. Though they passed through Gaul, and settled for a brief time in Spain, we shall not be justified in regarding them under any other aspect than the conquerors and occupants of Roman Africa. This was the scene of their extraordinary military successes, their short-lived dominion, their sudden and disgraceful fall. It seems, therefore, desirable, in their case, as well as in that of the Huns, to give a brief and independent account of what we are concerned to know regarding them, before we enter upon the special histories of France and Spain.

Gibbon declares that a striking resemblance, in manners, complexion, religion, and language, indicates that the Goths and Vandals were originally one great people; and he cites the testimony of Pliny and Procopius in support of this belief.* According to this theory, therefore, the Vandals are of the Teutonic stock. Other learned men have endeavoured to identify them with the Wendes; and the Wendes, as we have seen, according to the authority of Jornandes and others, were members of the Slavic race. The question has been examined, with great learning and ingenuity, by M. L. Marcus, Professor at the College of Dijon, in a work upon Vandal history. His conclusion, drawn from a comparison of what Tacitus, Pliny, Procopius, and Jornandes have left us upon the subject, is favourable to the hypothesis of Gibbon. Between the Wendes and the Vindili of Pliny, who were undoubtedly Vandals, he considers that no nearer point of union can be found than that of the Asiatic origin common to all nations of Slavic and Teutonic blood.† He accounts for the fact that some confusion upon the subject subsists in ancient writers, by the supposition that the Slaves, after the great migration of Goths and Vandals to the South, occupied the locality they had abandoned on the coasts of the Baltic, and became inheritors

* Hist. Nat. iv. 14; Bell. Vand. i. 1. † See Lecture III.

of the name, as well as of the land, of their predecessors. Hence they were commonly, though incorrectly, called Vindili, or Vandals. An etymology for the word Vandal, more ingenious than true, has found favour in the eyes of some modern writers. They pretend that the German verb *wandeln*, 'to wander,' was selected as the national appellative, from the nomad and erratic habits of the race; and this hypothesis is confirmed, they declare, by the "wanderings" of the Vandals in Gaul, Spain, and Africa. This is a somewhat *ex post facto* method of reasoning; and we might well inquire, with the old Pythagorean poet,

> *Τίς ποτ' ὠνόμασεν ὧδ' ἐς τὸ πᾶν ἐτητύμως*
> * * * *προνοίαισι τοῦ πεπρωμένου*
> *γλῶσσαν ἐν τύχᾳ νέμων;*

But the hypothesis is singularly at variance with the real facts of the case. Among all the German tribes, the Vandals are precisely those who earliest applied themselves to the pursuits of agriculture and commerce. We are told by Olympiodorus,* that the Goths were compelled to purchase wheat for subsistence from their Vandal brethren; and in the peace made with Aurelian, A.D. 271, they stipulated for the right of traffic with all the Danubian towns; a privilege very rarely accorded by the emperors to any barbarian people. Salvian, indeed, who regarded the Vandals with much partiality, and has largely eulogized them at the expense of the degenerate Romans, holds language which is inconsistent with the belief that they were naturally inclined or adapted for warlike pursuits.†

The earliest locality of the tribe, so far as authentic history can trace them, seems to have been the district between the Vistula and the Elbe. Here they were found by the Langobardi in their migration towards the South. A conflict

* Apud Photium. See Montesquieu, De la Grandeur et Déc. des Romains, ch. 19—21.

† De Gubernatione Dei.

ensued between the two, which terminated in the triumph of the invaders, and their establishment on the banks of the Elbe, where they were in all probability found by the Romans in their famous expedition under Tiberius. B.C. 10.
In the time of Pliny, we have that writer's testimony to the fact that the Vandals were still to be found between the two rivers. But during the next two A.D. 48.
centuries their unwarlike habits must have tended to diminish their importance among their fierce and active neighbours, of whom the Goths were the most formidable, and probably the most aggressive. Tacitus, at any rate, in his tractate upon the Germans, merely notices A.D. 100.
them by name, without devoting to them any of the attention which he has bestowed upon other eventually less-distinguished tribes. Another half-century finds them in a strong position among the mountains which form the northern frontier of Bohemia. It is certain that they took part in the great Marcomannic war. This A.D. 160.
war was occasioned by an event very similar to that which we have already recorded in the fourth lecture, as precipitating the Germanic tribes on the Empire. The passage of the Don by the Alani was a foretaste, on a smaller scale, of what happened when the same river was crossed by the Hunnish hordes; and the war itself derives its importance from the fact, that it was, perhaps, the first example of those leagues or federations, among nations of barbarian blood, which gradually gathered strength until they became more than a match even for the colossal military power of the Cæsars. In the general movement of the German populations at this period, we find the Vandals in combination with the Marcomanni, the Sarmates, and the Quadi, all of whom were defeated by Marcus A.D. 170.
Aurelius in Pannonia. The defeat, though severe, was not decisive; for, eight years afterwards, they again united themselves with some Sarmatian tribes, as

the Iazyges, and others of Teutonic extraction, in an attack upon the Empire. They succeeded in conciliating the respect, if not the favour, of Rome; for in the treaty made by Commodus, the son of Marcus Aurelius, with the Marcomanni, the Vandals are one of the tribes secured from the hostility of those persevering enemies of the Roman empire. At this time, Ptolemy informs us that the Vandals occupied the districts lying around the sources of the Elbe; and all other investigation confirms the statement. They were the neighbours of the Marcomanni; and their relations, notwithstanding the former feud, became so intimate as to occasion alarm at Rome, which had by this time begun to understand the serious peril involved in these barbaric leagues. It was not, however, till the reign of Aurelian that the danger was developed. Then a general, systematic, and violent attack was made by all the tribes who dwelt along the Danube against the great power which held its southern bank. The Alemanni, the Marcomanni, and the Vandals, menaced Noricum and Rhætia. The Goths were prepared to precipitate themselves upon Pannonia. Aurelian was successful enough to impose a peace upon his adversaries; and in the account given of this peace, we find that the two Vandal monarchs visited the Roman camp with the intention of depositing their children as hostages. The fact deserves notice; because it shows us that the twofold form of the Vandal monarchy was of early date, and that the subsequent partition of the tribe in the Spanish peninsula into Vandals proper and Vandali Silingi, was a natural result of the national institutions, and analogous to the division of their great rivals and contemporaries into Eastern and Western Goths, a division asserted by Jornandes to be as ancient as the existence of the people themselves.* Not more than seven years elapsed before we

A.D. 180.

A.D. 270.

* De Reb. Get. § 14.

find the Vandals again engaged with Probus, the successor of Aurelian. The Roman enticed the choleric barbarians across the Danube, and, taking them at a disadvantage, slew many in the field: the remainder he made prisoners; and the deportation of at least a portion of these captives into the most distant locality of his empire—the neighbourhood of the modern town of Cambridge— A.D. 277. afforded to the splenetic Byron the opportunity of a small sneer against his own university:—

> "Learning's boast and its disgrace,
> The dark asylum of a Vandal race."

It is the opinion of those who have traced with care the scattered notices to be found of the Vandal movements, that by this time they had quitted the Riesen-gebirge, and were posted near the banks of the Danube; a supposition which seems to be supported by the provisions made in their treaties with Rome for the privilege of trading with the towns situated upon that river. It is unimportant to determine the exact period when they established themselves in the districts lying between the Theiss, the Maroxh, and the Danube; all that we know for certain is, that, after a sanguinary and stubborn contest with the Goths, they were ejected from their seats, and compelled to take refuge in Pannonia. This was, however, the closing scene of a war, or rather, of a series of wars, concerning which a contemporary Roman rhetorician wrote, in language well worthy of being recorded, because it shows how thoroughly alive, by this time, the Empire had become with respect to the peril to be apprehended from the barbarians, and how thoroughly it understood, even though it only imperfectly practised, the policy of producing dissension among them. "How prosperous is thy reign, O Maximian! Everywhere the barbarians are rending each other; they furiously cut each other's throats on the field of battle; they double the effect of their defeats by the snares in which they involve one

another. One might suppose it was their intention to exhibit to the world a repetition of thy expeditions into Sarmatia, Rhætia, and the country beyond the Rhine, so terribly do they rage against each other in their wrath; Praise be to Jupiter! Praise be to propitious Hercules! You have at last succeeded in carrying civil war into the borders of these nations; you have banished it from the territories of this empire into those of your ene-
A.D. 292. mies."* Had we in our possession a history of these centuries composed by German annalists, we should find that this destructive war changed in many important respects the relations of the German tribes, and materially affected their destiny. It fixed the Burgundians in Franconia and on the banks of the Main, the Gepidæ in Silesia, and the Vandals in the district which we have described, until, that is to say, the period of their expulsion by the Goths. We have in a previous lecture recorded briefly the series of events by which the Gothic nation, foiled in its unsuccessful wars with Rome and the Sarmatian tribes, was induced to direct its restless ambition and formidable military strength against the Vandals. In accordance with a custom which indicates something of the chivalric spirit, the growth among the same races of later days, both parties, as the Cimbri and Teutones proposed to Marius, determined a time and place in which to combat for victory and dominion. The Goths slew Vicimer, the Vandal king, and routed his countrymen. Humbled and despairing, the defeated Vandals applied to Rome for admission within her frontiers, and Constantine, counting on their animosity towards
A.D. 332. the Goths, and expecting to find in the suppliants a useful auxiliary against such a formidable enemy, per-
A.D. 337. mitted them to settle in Pannonia. They remained there for seventy years, exhibiting the greatest aptitude for commerce and the arts of peace.

* Mamertinus, Paneg. ii. 16.

During this period, the nation furnished several of the most able men, who distinguished themselves in the service of the Empire. It is only necessary to mention Stilicho, who, in 395 A.D., espoused Serena, niece of the emperor Theodosius the Great. To his valour as a soldier, and extraordinary skill as a leader, Rome, as we have seen, more than once owed her existence. It was he who beat and baffled Alaric and his Goths, thereby justifying the policy which had united the Vandals to the standard of the Empire. In Pannonia, too, the Vandals were converted to Christianity. The earliest converts, most probably, as in the similar case of the Goths, were attached to the orthodox faith. But the process of Christianizing a whole nation of Pagans had not, it is most likely, proceeded far when Constantine died, in the spring of 337 A.D. The personal example of the occupants of the throne, and the entire influence of the imperial government, were then thrown into the opposite scale; and it is therefore but little surprising that Arianism should have prospered and taken deep root among races of uncontroversial warriors, such as were the Vandals and the Goths. How far the teaching and example of Ulphilas, the Gothic bishop, may have contributed to the result among a cognate people, speaking the same language as his own, it is now impossible to decide, or even to conjecture. But it is certain that when, in the year 406 A.D., the Vandals passed from Pannonia into Gaul, they all professed the Arian form of Christianity. On the last day of this year, the Vandals, in combination with the Alani, and perhaps the Sueves, crossed the Rhine, on that memorable expedition into Gaul, to which reference has already more than once been made. St. Jerome associates with these three peoples the Quadi, Sarmatians, Heruli, Gepidæ, and Saxons. Very probably many members of these warlike tribes accompanied the standard of the confederates. It seems to have been a well-understood and well-organized adventure, a "Hourra" of

A.D. 406.

barbarism upon the undefended riches of the Gallic province; and, as such, it attracted bold spirits wherever they were to be found. Radagasius, Alaric, Alboin, all came with a similar following, in search of a similar prize. The Vandals passed the river between Mayence and Cologne. But already had the Franks marked out Gaul as a possession for themselves. They would not, therefore, deliver it up to the invaders without a struggle, and fought a bloody battle in its defence, wherein, says Gregory of Tours, they would have annihilated the Vandals, had not the Alani come opportunely to the rescue. No mention is made of the Suevi in this passage; and there is other authority for believing that they entered Gaul much further to the south, by the passes of the Alps. It is impossible here to enter upon all the other considerations which render it probable that Gibbon is mistaken in his positive assertion concerning the combined movement of these three Germanic nations, and in the belief which has generally been accepted, on his authority, that they formed part of the army with which Radagasius intended to make himself master of Italy. It is very improbable that, at a time when barbarian leaders of great military skill were to be found on all sides, these numerous nations should have put themselves beneath the guidance of an Incapable like Radagasius; it is very improbable that three hundred thousand men could have been collected by any single chief for a single military expedition; it is, once more, very improbable that, had they been so combined, any force to be found in Italy could have resisted them. And it is somewhat strange that an hypothesis of the kind should have been thought necessary to account for a movement which occurred at a time when the tribes upon the boundaries of the Empire were perpetually casting themselves upon her territory, and combining against her power. Perhaps the story may have had some connection with the absurd calumny against Stilicho, that, namely, these Alani, Sueves, and Van-

dals, were induced, by his treachery, to enter Gaul, while he was meditating the transference of the imperial purple to his own son. Whether this be the case or not, Procopius,* in asserting that the Vandals and Alani were expelled from Pannonia by famine, most probably gives us a hint of the true causes which prompted their migration. Ever since the advent of the Huns, the Gothic and Roman armies had been traversing the country and exhausting its resources. The unfortunate inhabitants doubtless adopted the resolution of abandoning, as soon as a fit opportunity should occur, a locality which it was useless, perhaps impossible, to retain. This opportunity was furnished by the onslaught of Radagasius upon Italy, and the withdrawal of the Gaulish garrisons for its defence. Gaul, therefore, became defenceless. The gallant attempt of the Franks to stay the progress of the invaders was made in vain. Sooner or later, the triple federation became a fact; the Germans united their arms, and poured across the frontier. Orosius, though adhering to the story about Stilicho, briefly and accurately describes the result:—"In the mean time, the tribes of the Alani, Suevi, and Vandals, *and many others with them*, called into action by Stilicho, trample down the Franks, effect the passage of the Rhine, invade the Gallic provinces, and advance in an unbroken course to the foot of the Pyrenees. Repulsed for the moment by this great barrier, they scatter themselves among the surrounding provinces."† Perhaps no greater period of suffering has ever visited any country, than that which the Celtic inheritors of Roman wealth, luxury, and refinement, were now called upon to endure. In after-time, every church and monastery in the land, by its commemorative services, long perpetuated the memory of those who were slaughtered and tortured by these fierce Teutons, either in the search for concealed treasures, or under the inspiration of a relentless proselytism in favour of Arian

* Bell. Vand. i. 3. † Oros. vii. 38.

doctrines or pagan rites. St. Jerome has left us a picture of their progress. "Mayence," says he, "that once famous town, was taken by assault and pillaged. Several thousand persons were massacred in the church. Worms, after a long siege, was captured and destroyed. Rheims, that powerful city, Amiens, Arras, St. Omer, Tournay, Spires, and Strasburg, became German towns. In Aquitaine, in the Lyonnaise, in the province of Narbonne, everything was ravaged except some places still assailed by the sword of the enemy from without and by famine from within."* Salvian, too, has given us, in the work to which we have already referred, a similar account. "They spread themselves first of all over Germania Prima, that is to say, through the territories of Mayence, Worms, Spires, and Strasburg. When these countries were reduced to ruin, the conflagration extended to Belgium, or the districts lying between the Rhine, the Maine, the Seine, and the ocean; next, it reached opulent Aquitaine, and finally, the whole of Gaul."† The devastation was cruel and complete. Whole populations were exterminated or led into captivity. Neither sex, nor age, nor holy office, were spared the degrading torments inflicted upon the vilest of the rabble. Cities and churches were given to the flames, while the wretched inhabitants, laden with their own property as booty for their victors, were pricked on with lances, in order that they might keep pace with the war-horses and waggons of the invading host. "Not the ocean itself," bitterly complains the Christian poet, "when it has burst in upon us with an inundation, is wont to leave so terrible a ruin. They have borne away our flocks, our fruits, our corn; they have cut down our olives and our vines; they have destroyed our country dwellings by fire or water: the little which remains to us is a desert and a desolation."‡

* Epist. ad Ageruchiam, de Monogamia. † De Guber. Dei, lib. vii.
‡ Hymnus de Provid., ascribed to St. Prosper of Aquitaine.

It is the main difficulty of a complicated subject like that with which these lectures deal, to avoid unprofitable repetitions. The evil cannot be entirely avoided, and even partial success can only be acquired by a *coup d'œil* of the whole topic, which implies an exactness of knowledge not very easily attainable. We can merely attempt what seems the most intelligible arrangement of the facts, and in pursuance of this object, will leave to the lecture upon Spanish History the involved relations, imperial and provincial, the confused struggles between Constantine, Constantius, Astolphus, Gerontius, Honorius, and others, during which the Vandals obtained a footing in the Peninsula. The Marcomanni, to whom, as auxiliary troops of Constantine, the passes of the Pyrenees had been confided, are generally believed to have invited their countrymen into Spain, in disgust at their weary and unprofitable watch on those inhospitable peaks. The Teutons, in a triple league, Sueves, Alani, and Vandals, plunged into those dangerous defiles, on the 29th of October, A.D. 409, and emerged on the southern side, bent upon renewing the rapine which had devastated Gaul. How well they succeeded will be told elsewhere. The portion of Spain which, in its general partition, fell to the share of the two Vandal tribes, will be described in the same place. In the year 411 or 412 A.D., the emperor Honorius ratified this partition, and the Vandals seemed to hold a large part of Spain under the sanction of the Empire. That the concession, however, was wrung only from the emperor's weakness, was made manifest by the treacherous reservation which accompanied it. According to Roman law, a prescription of thirty years constituted a full right to possession. Honorius published an edict, expressly providing that no such prescription should apply to the tenure of the Spanish provinces by the Vandals and other German invaders.* It was obviously

A.D. 409.

A.D. 412.

* Procop., Bell. Vand. i. 3.

his intention to resume one day, by force, what he had lost by feebleness. So far as Rome was concerned, that day never arrived. For the moment, prosperity produced an excellent effect upon the Vandal character. They resumed the pastoral and agricultural life which they had begun in Pannonia, and with increased energy and success; for the bright skies of Andalusia were a welcome exchange from the cold and mist which then distinguished the German climate. Abundant harvests covered the plains; the hills were once more white with those flocks, whose breed had long produced a wool famous throughout the ancient world. The inhabitants shared largely in the general amelioration. From the great senatorial proprietors of land, the Vandals practically took little more than the numerous districts which had long been lying uncultivated from want of an arm to guide the plough. The luckless municipal Decurions were allowed to live in peace, and no longer hunted over sea and land, if they absconded, from utter inability to make up the defalcations in the enormous imposts levied by the imperial treasury. The land wore a universal aspect of prosperity, the people one of content. "They treat the Romans who remain there so kindly," said Orosius, "that there are found those who prefer freedom with poverty among the barbarians, to a life rendered wretched by taxation (tributariam solicitudinem) among their own countrymen."* And Salvian, with an affectation of epigrammatic point, declares, "They prefer to live as free men under the guise of captivity, rather than as captives under the guise of freedom."† The imperial court could not tolerate good government within the possible cognizance of its subjects. It determined to destroy the Vandal dominion in Spain, and, unfortunately, it succeeded. It brought the Goths, the ancient rivals of the Vandal race, over the Pyrenees, expecting by this master-stroke of policy

* Orosius, vii. 41. † De Gub. Dei, v.

to reap the benefit of their mutual hostility. The Goths were to annihilate their enemy; but it was calculated, that in the struggle their own strength would waste away. We shall hereafter, in treating of the Visigoth settlement in Spain, find it necessary to recur to this subject. At present, we are merely concerned with the fact, that in the war prosecuted by Wallia, king of the Goths, against the confederation which possessed the peninsula, he entirely annihilated, it is said, the "Silingi Vandals," and so roughly handled the Alani, that henceforth we find them incorporated with the "Vandals proper," whose leader bore the name of King of the two Nations. So far the intrigue concocted upon the Palatine had succeeded. But the progress of events opened the eyes of the Gothic king; he perceived how little it would further his own ambitious projects to subdue Spain for an imperial master, and his proximity to the coasts of the Mediterranean revived in his mind a project which, since the time of Alaric's unsuccessful attempt upon Sicily, had probably never been entirely absent from the thoughts of his countrymen. He determined to pass over into Africa, the richest province of the Roman empire, and the one which offered the best opportunities for the establishment of an independent kingdom. His fleet, like that of Alaric, was unfortunate: it perished before his eyes in the Straits of Gibraltar. Probably, he would have renewed the attempt; but the court of Rome had now caught the alarm. Africa was the granary of the capital; fatal indeed would be the result, if it fell into the hands of the Goths. The emperor hastened to buy off Wallia by a grant of land in Gaul, which was, as we shall see in a future lecture, the real foundation of the Visigoth kingdom on both sides of the Pyrenees. The whole of Spain was now left in the hands of the three original tribes, or rather, the remains of these tribes enfeebled by

A.D. 416—418.

A.D. 419.

warfare and demoralized by the cruel policy of Rome. The hand of the Goth had fallen most heavily upon the Alani and the Silingi Vandals; how far the Vandals proper were involved in the war, or whether they took part in it at all, has not been recorded, and cannot now be known. It is certain that they emerged from those evil days more scathless than their brethren, and, consequently, henceforward assumed the leading place. United to the Alani and the wreck of the Silingi,—for it is unreasonable to suppose that the latter were utterly destroyed,—they now became a comparatively powerful body. None were left, save the Sueves, to dispute with them the sovereignty of Spain. But the Sueves, upon crossing the Pyrenees, had established themselves in the north and north-western part of the peninsula. Their position was strong, and they seem to have disputed with the Vandals the possession of the whole peninsula. According to Gregory of Tours, the two armies met, and were preparing for conflict, when the Suevic king proposed to decide the question by the chivalric expedient of a single combat. The proposal was accepted; the Vandal champion was successful, and all Gallicia submitted to Vandal rule. According to another account, the battle was prevented by the appearance of a Roman force sent to succour the Sueves, which excited the suspicion of both the belligerents. Each story may be true. Rome, at any rate, made one great and final effort for the recovery of her favourite province. Gaul and Italy were exhausted to produce an armament which should recall the earlier magnificence and vigour of the imperial rule. Castinus was placed at its head. He passed the Pyrenees, and apparently carried all before him. The Vandals were driven into Andalusia, and inclosed within a narrow space, where they were unable to provision their army. Surrender was talked of; we may imagine with the intent of producing a

A.D. 420.

delusive security in the assailants; for suddenly the Vandals turned upon the Romans, and inflicted upon them a signal and bloody defeat. Twenty thousand men were left dead upon the field of battle, and Castinus never ceased his flight until he reached the gates of Tarragona. The Roman writers ascribe their misfortune to the defection of some Gothic auxiliaries. That these Goths did eventually unite with the Vandals is certain, for they joined them in Africa. But is it probable that they should have chosen for the time of their defection the moment when the fortunes which they sought to share were in so desperate a condition?

A.D. 422.

And now it might seem that Spain was entirely delivered into the hands of the Vandal. For a time, indeed, it was so. He traversed the whole country, burning, pillaging, destroying, and, above all, persecuting the clergy and people, who would not accept the Arian form of faith. It seems as if the abominable policy pursued by Rome had entirely changed the nature of the race, or rather, revived and exaggerated its more odious features. For the two years which followed the defeat of Castinus, "Vandalism," in all senses of the word, was dominant throughout the whole of Spain, on the opposite Mauritanian coasts, in the Balearic Isles, in Corsica itself. That this state of things passed away; that the devouring torrent changed its course, and ceased to menace the kingdoms of Europe and the interests of Catholic Christianity, is to be ascribed to the genius and policy, though not to the goodwill, of one man—Genseric, king of the Vandals, the worthy rival of Alaric and Attila in that sanguinary renown which so nearly approaches to infamy. We have the man's portrait, it is true, from the writers of the party whom he humbled and cruelly ill-used; but, after all allowance for exaggerated colouring, the picture is dark indeed. He was, we hear, a more frightful barbarian

than any who had as yet arisen among the foes of Rome. Lame and hideous in aspect, of slow speech, but of iron will, inconceivable duplicity, and boundless ambition, he had never been known to listen to the voice of justice or of mercy; he had never recoiled from any act of perfidy or blood which he believed his interests to demand. He is admitted to have been temperate in his personal habits, but utterly incapable of controlling himself when roused to anger. His perspicacity saw to the bottom of everything; he never missed an opportunity; he carried out a project in less time than others spent in meditating upon it;—of all men who ever lived, he was the most adroit in sowing the seeds of animosity and dissension among others.* Such was the leader who now directed the destiny of his people.

A.D. 428.

It was not until the year 428 A.D., that Genseric actually succeeded his elder brother Gunderic on the throne, of whom it is confidently asserted that he rid himself by foul play.† But there is every reason to suppose that, for many years previous, Genseric was the real governor of the nation. It was he who, according to Jornandes, struck the severest blows against the Roman power in Spain, long before he passed into Africa.‡ "Of the two sons of Godigischus, Gunderic," says Procopius, "the legitimate son, was incapable; but Genseric, the bastard, was trained up in arms, in the use of which he surpassed all men upon the earth."§ To him, therefore, we may safely ascribe the conquests, rapine, and persecution which followed the defeat of Castinus. But when he had overrun Spain, he was perspicacious enough to perceive the difficulty of retaining it. He could not count upon the allegiance of the inhabitants of the province, who had never forgotten the old imperial traditions, and were more than half-romanized in their feelings and habits.

* Jornandes, de Reb. Get. c. 33.

† Procopius, Bell. Vand. i. 3. ‡ *Ibid.* § *Ibid.*

he could not count upon a continuance of the treachery of the Goths, by which he had so largely profited during or after the defeat of Castinus; but he *could* count upon the certain rivalry and opposition of the Visigoth power, now rising up beyond the Pyrenees, backed by all the aid which the Roman court might be able to furnish in the way of secret treachery or open force. On the other hand, across the narrow straits lay wealthy and fertile Africa, — more rich as a prize, more defensible as a military position, more favourable in respect of its social state for his ambitious enterprise. Undeterred, therefore, by the failures of Alaric and Wallia, to Africa he turned his eyes. Africa was unapproachable, save by sea; but the Empire of the Decadence was especially weak in its marine. To these inducements Professor Marcus, in his excellent work before alluded to, adds two others, which must have had a powerful effect,— the hostility of the Moors to the Roman power, and that of the sectaries and religious refugees to the Catholic Church. The Moors had never accepted the domination of the Romans in Africa. A race of rude herdsmen, ignorant of the use of letters, of unknown origin,* and habituated to the freedom of the desert, they felt profound irritation at the neighbourhood of a power which brought the constraints of civilization and settled government into contact with their nomad life. This irritation had been increased by the recent destruction of the temple of the goddess Cælestis; "under whose invocation," says M. Marcus, "the Moors, two centuries later, thrice chased from Africa the nation which had just destroyed the Persian empire, and wrested from the Greeks the most beautiful provinces of Asia." Again: the sands of the desert and the caverns of the Atlas were now filled with men as bitter enemies to the religion of Rome, as were the Mauritanians to her rule. Africa had been converted into

A.D. 421.

* Gibbon, ch. xli.

an asylum for sectaries of every sort; Circumcellions, Donatists, Priscillians, Pelagians, Manichæans, and a hundred other heretical bodies, expelled from the great centres of Christian action and authority, dreamed throughout their monotonous exile of no other object than vengeance against the dominant dogmas of Constantinople and of Rome. No other country, therefore, in the Empire proffered to the astute monarch of the Vandals so fitting a field either for proselytism or feats of arms. And, finally, there was a personal motive which induced Genseric to prefer a new empire beyond the sea to the hereditary seat of Vandal dominion in Europe:—he was an illegitimate son; the widow and the ten sons of Gunderic were still living, and might at any moment assert their right. This right it would be easy for the conqueror of Africa, and the founder of a new dynasty, to resist in a distant land, where the partisans of the deposed family would naturally exercise less weight. These reasons are, I think, sufficient to solve that somewhat interesting historical problem why Genseric, at the hour of his triumph, and in the plenitude of his power, abandoned the country which had witnessed this triumph, and where this power seemed on the point of consolidation, to risk his fortunes in another land. The assertion of the Goth Jornandes, that it was the sword of his countrymen which drove the Vandals across the strait,* though in his usual style of national self-exaltation, is in contradiction to ascertained facts, and unworthy of the slightest credit.

As Genseric stood on the coast of the Mediterranean, with his eyes fixed upon its southern shore, meditating, no doubt, the means of effecting a more successful transit than his Gothic predecessor, one of those wonderful coincidences which men call Chance, placed in his hands the exact object of his desires. Owing to an intrigue in the imperial court,

* Jornandes, de Reb. Get. §§ 32, 33.

which has been recorded in its proper place,* Boniface, count of Africa, who had been invested with this important office by Honorius, invited the aid of the Vandal king, and promised him vessels for the transport of his troops. He promised, it is said, a third of Africa to each of the Vandal princes, intending to retain the remaining third for himself.† In the early spring of 429 A.D., the whole Vandal nation—warriors, women, children, and serfs—were gathered to the Strait of Gibraltar. After subtracting the women, the whole number is said to have reached 80,000. But this is probably an exaggeration, or the fighting-men were disproportionately few; for during their subsequent exploits, the Vandal army does not seem to have exceeded 30,000 combatants. We cannot suppose that the whole population at once attached themselves to Genseric; indeed, there is evidence to show that many remained for a time in Spain; nor, again, is there any doubt but that warriors of various other Teutonic tribes were attracted to the Vandal standard by the reputation of the leader and the magnitude of the prize which he proposed to their cupidity. Partly in the vessels of Boniface, and partly in those which the inhabitants of the country were only too glad to furnish, this mixed multitude crossed the strait. Genseric returned for a moment to cut to pieces a Suevic army which was ravaging the country in his rear, but immediately rejoined his fleet. The storm burst at last upon this Africa which had so long enjoyed an immunity from the evils that were afflicting Europe. Of all the Teutonic tribes, the Vandals had won for themselves the most terrible name. Their coming was the signal for utter consternation and headlong flight. The distant oases of the desert, the gorges and caverns of the Atlas, were crowded with fugitives forced from the luxurious homes of a civilized

A.D. 429.

* Lecture V. p. 249.

† The account of Procopius, Bell Vand. i. 3.

and prosperous people. The Vandals more than justified their ill-omened reputation: they burnt the villages before them; put men, women, and children to the sword; destroyed the growing crops and agricultural implements, and even cut down the trees. To their native ferocity was added vengeance for their wrongs in Spain, and a furious fanaticism, fanned into still fiercer flames by the Donatist sectaries and other unrelenting enemies of the Catholic party. The Moors, too, exultingly seized the occasion to indulge their unquenchable hatred against civilization and Rome. They swelled the ranks of the invaders, or secured a pathway for their advance by that renowned cavalry which still swoops like the eagle upon its prey, and, like the eagle, disappears in a moment from the sight. In the mean time, Boniface had been undeceived: he found that the empress Placidia was still his affectionate and confiding mistress, and that his new ally was a formidable and unscrupulous foe. In vain did he attempt negotiation. The Vandal listened for a moment, then suddenly assailed him in the field. He was speedily besieged in Hippona, a Numidian town. The German barbarians, like all others, were little skilled in siege operations, and are said to have borrowed a horrible expedient from the Moors for reducing the place. All the prisoners, and all the cattle upon which they could lay hands, were slaughtered, and cast into the moat before the walls, in order that their corrupting carcasses might taint the air, and compel, by pestilence, that submission which they could not obtain by arms. The town, however, held out till the autumn of the following year; and in the mean time succours arrived both from Rome and Constantinople, and with them Aspar, the ablest officer of the Eastern empire. The result was a pitched battle, in which the Vandals were victorious. Aspar returned to the Byzantine court; Boniface was recalled by his mistress to oppose the rising influence of

A.D. 430.

A.D. 431.

Aëtius, and to perish, though victorious, in the disastrous combat of Ravenna. Before quitting Africa, he made peace with Genseric, who, now, as ever, — calm, subtle, and treacherous,—saw in this suspension of hostilities, not only the opportunity to consolidate his conquests and recruit his strength, but also the prospect of an internecine conflict in Italy between the two most powerful and skilful soldiers of the West. A.D. 432.

By the terms of this peace, Genseric obtained the three Mauritani and istricts, a part of the old Roman province, much less fertile than Eastern Africa. The relations of the two parties must have been in a very unsettled state; probably, Genseric was encroaching upon the richer and more valuable territory; for in the year 435 a fresh peace, or ratification of the previous one, was contracted between the Vandal king and the Count Trigetius, envoy of the Roman court. We know little of the events which immediately followed. Valentinian had made peace, and assigned certain territories to the Vandals; but Valentinian, like Honorius, had also taken care to inform his Roman subjects that the usual thirty years' prescription was not applicable to this grant,*—a measure which can only have been meant to keep alive the hope of deliverance from a barbarous master and a foreign yoke. Genseric probably became aware of the reservation, and understood it. There is not the slightest reason for supposing that he meant to observe his own promises, or that he ever intended to stop short of the plunder of Carthage, and perhaps of Rome. But the duplicity of his enemies deprives their outcry against barbarian faithlessness of its force. The wrath of the Vandal king first broke forth against the Catholic clergy. He attempted to enforce Arianism upon all, and expelled those who refused obedience from their benefices and sees. Some writers ascribe this violent access of Arian zeal to the injudicious A.D. 435. A.D. 437.

* Cod. Theodos. Nov. Valent.; quoted by Marcus, iii. 2, notes.

attempts at proselytism made by the orthodox, and the bitter controversial language with which their writings were at this period filled. To a certain extent it may be so; but it is beyond doubt that, ever since the attempt of Castinus in Spain, a revengeful hostility to the Catholics, and a fixed resolve to substitute the Arian faith for the Confession of Nice, had taken possession of the Vandal mind. These persecutions were, or should have been, a warning to Rome and Catholic Christendom;—a sombre presage of the storm about to burst with such fatal fury upon their coasts. Yet they seem to have been lulled into an inconceivable apathy; for on the 19th of October, 439, the world was thunderstruck by the ominous tidings that Genseric, without warning, without any declaration of hostilities, had made himself master of the magnificent city of Carthage, the rival of Rome and the queen of Africa. Since the days when Marius sat among her grass-grown ruins, an immense revolution had taken place in her appearance and her fortunes. When Constantinople became the seat of the Eastern empire, Carthage supplied Rome with the means of subsistence. She had outgrown even Alexandria in wealth, external splendour, and population, and became the seat of a power of sufficient prestige and material resources to threaten the capital itself. Here, in the year 413, a governor of Africa had fitted out a fleet of seven hundred ships of war, for the purpose of dethroning Honorius;* and here, after the sack of Rome by Alaric, had gone many of the most powerful families of the Roman patriciate to enjoy that luxury which the Alps and the Adriatic had been unable to protect. But let us hear the language of a contemporary. "Where," says Salvian, "can we find treasures which surpass those of the Africans? Where shall we see commerce more flourishing, or storehouses more full? The prophet Ezekiel said to Tyre, 'Thou

A.D. 439.

* It is this expedition which is connected with the plot of Professor Kingsley's novel of Hypatia.

art filled with silver and gold because of thy merchandise;' and I say, that her commerce so enriched Africa, that not only were her treasure-houses filled themselves, but they were capable of filling those of all the world. Carthage, once the rival of Rome in power and military renown, was now her rival in majesty and splendour. Carthage, the Rome of Africa, was the central seat of the imperial government: there were her magistrates; there her officers of state; there the schools of the liberal arts; the professional chairs of philosophy, language, and jurisprudence. There, too, was a military commandant and a numerous garrison; a governor with the title of proconsul, but who really exercised a consul's power."* Such was the city which, in a single hour, at the height of her prosperity, and in the midst of her luxurious and effeminate life, fell into the hands of a bloody, faithless, and perfidious race, the most dreadful, as the most dreaded, among all the men of barbarian descent who trampled out the dying glories of the Empire. But with the exceeding bitter cry which went up from the suffering city, there was heard also the voice of the people of God, proclaiming that this terrible visitation was a most just judgment, a retribution for unexampled sin.† It is from no desire to dwell upon so revolting a topic, that we repeat the words of the preacher who proclaimed to an unheeding generation, "the burthen of Carthage," as Ezekiel proclaimed that of her Phœnician ancestress. But, once for all, and as in crucial instance, we may see in the fall of this great metropolitan city, the crimes of the age, and the curse they engendered, the type of that old-world corruption which it was needful to purify as by fire, ere a new world could be born from its ashes. Africa, according to Salvian, was "the home and household of all

* De Gubernatione Dei.

† Πᾶσα ἰδέα συμφορᾶς is the strong expression of Procopius. "Calamity of every conceivable kind encompassed the Africans."—*Bell. Vand.* i. 5.

the vices;" "the seething caldron of iniquity;" "the bloody city, the pot whose scum is therein," described by the prophet.* "They have all the vices," he exclaims, "that the Romans have; but their avarice, their drunkenness, and their perjury, are immeasurable. Every vice of all the world is found among them, unredeemed by the national virtues which palliate the crimes of other men. The Goths are perfidious but chaste; the Alani unchaste, but less remarkable for perfidy; the Franks are liars, but hospitable; the Saxons are men of brutal cruelty, but marvellous continence. All nations, in short, have their peculiar defects. In the whole African race, or nearly the whole of it, every evil that I know of may be found. It is an Ætna blazing with the fires of impurity and lust. Impure and African are synonymous in signification, and inseparable in fact." He then goes on to describe the wealth, splendour, and public institutions of the great city; its universal and frightful debauchery, where every class was drunk with wine and lust; the miserable condition of the poor, ground down with such relentless oppression that they called upon God, in their misery, for the coming of the barbarian, and did not call in vain; above all, the pervading prostitution, which he depicts in language too plain and emphatic to be repeated here. Yet worse remained behind. The fires of Heaven consumed the cities of the plain, yet their guilt was not as the guilt of Carthage; for with Carthage, though the crime was as universal, the opportunities of knowledge were very different. And then is disclosed the secret of the Vandal visitation. "Who could have marvelled," asks Salvian, "if the barbarian Vandals, in the heat of their triumph, and revelling in the luxuries which their sword had won, had given way to such iniquities." But no; they refused to pollute themselves with Roman vice; they would not wallow in this great defilement. "Who," says he elsewhere, "after

* Ezekiel, xxiv. 6.

this"—the account just given of Roman society—"could refuse the tribute of his admiration to the Vandal tribes, who, though they entered cities of most lavish wealth, where all these things were done before their eyes, yet rejected the licentiousness of these corrupted men, as pollution to their morals, and sought that which was good to possess, avoiding the stain of evil. This were enough to say in their praise; but I have more to add. They treated as an abomination the peculiar crime of the conquered; nay, they treated as abomination all the incentives to female prostitution, harlotry, and sin."* Who can wonder, after these things, at the fall of Roman society? "What hope," truly says Salvian, "can there be for Rome and the Romans, when barbarians are more pure and chaste than they?" When the fountain of family life in Southern Europe and Africa was so utterly polluted at its source, was it not needful that the stream should be cleansed by the cold clear waters which came rushing down from Scandinavian snows? The temperament of the Teutonic tribes, fiery only in the heat of battle, was pure in the relations of domestic life. The reverence for woman;—the sanctity of home, which had their birth in the German forests, coming into contact with, and catching the spirit of Christianity, breathed the breath of a regenerate life into a society which had already been laid within the tomb, and was exhaling the odour of the charnel-house. The sentiment of Teutonic chivalry, the spirit of Christianity, were the guardian Genii which sat beside the cradle of modern national life, and first gave the modern world assurance of a "Nation."

But we must resume our narrative. Carthage fell, a defenceless and opulent city, into the hands of an armed and rapacious barbarian. The historian, like the poet, finds the power of language too feeble for A.D. 439.

* Salv. de Gub. Dei, vii. 251, 252.

great sufferings and great crimes. He is compelled to take refuge in silence.

> "Sorrow it were, and shame to tell,
> The butcher-work that there befell."

The terrible cry of agony which rose from the perishing city, echoed across the Mediterranean, and told Rome that her own hour was at hand. She looked around her on all sides for assistance; but the crafty Vandal had chosen well his time. In Gaul, Theodoric, king of the Visigoths, whose daughter was espoused to the son of Genseric, had just cut to pieces a Roman army, and was giving full employment to the legions of Aëtius. In Spain, the Sueves were daily gaining ground. Attila once more menaced the Eastern empire with a new invasion of Greece. Nevertheless, by superhuman efforts, the imperial court made such preparations for resistance, that Genseric did not deem it wise as yet to strike at the heart of his enemy. He descended upon Sicily and Calabria, knowing that, since the loss of Carthage, Rome depended upon these provinces for her subsistence. He counted, also, on finding a population favourably disposed to himself; for, as we have explained in a previous lecture, all the public domains of the state were cultivated by slaves, whom cruel treatment and a life of degradation had rendered bitter enemies to their masters. We have already had the picture of a combat between the German barbarians and a Roman army, described by a contemporary;* as a pendant, we will extract from another contemporary the picture of a scene scarcely less common and characteristic of the age—a Vandal descent upon the coast of Italy. "At their ease the enemy were roaming over the open sea, when, by the common consent of all orders of the state, the people, the senate, the soldiery, and by thy colleague himself, the Empire was conferred upon thee" [Sidonius is addressing the new

* Lecture III. p. 139.

emperor Majorian]. "Borne by the favouring southern breeze, the foe invades the Campanian shore, and assails with his Moorish soldiery the unguarded husbandman. The sleek and lazy Vandal, seated upon the rowing-benches of his ship, awaits the prey which he had bid his captive capture and bring to him on board. But in an instant your bands precipitate themselves between both parties of the enemy, just where the level ground divides the sea from the heights, and a winding river forms by its mouth a port. At first the frightened crowd make for the hills, and, excluded from the banks which it had abandoned, becomes the booty of those of whom it would have made a booty. Then the whole pirate band, excited into wrath, unite for combat: some disembark their well-trained steeds from rudely-fashioned boats; some clothe themselves in iron mail, of which the rusty hues resemble their own skin; some string their pliant bows, and make ready the shafts which infuse into a wound the poison in which they have been dipped, and strike two victims, though but once discharged. And now the dragon-banner flies between the foes; his throat swells with the inflating breeze: with gaping jaws the pictured image seems to ravin for his prey; the winds stir into wrath his form upon the flag, as their breath contracts his twisting back, and his belly can no longer contain the blast. Soon the hoarse trumpet gives forth its crashing notes; shrilly the clarions answer; and valour kindles even in the coward's breast: on all sides falls the arrow-flight, but from ours only does it wound. One lies prostrate, pierced by the whirring javelin, which will scarce at a second death arrest its flight; another is rolled over by a spear-thrust; one pierced by a flying missile, another by a lance; tumbles from his steed; this one again falls by a winged shaft, the victim of a far-distant arm:* some with the sinews of their legs cut through,

* "Absentem passus dextram:" one of the conceits of which several specimens are to be found in every page. The French editor, whose

linger on, denied the power to die. Here a warrior cleaves away part of the helmet, and with it the brain within: there the stout arm of a second hews piteously asunder the skull with his two-edged sword. Soon as the Vandal, turning from the field, betakes himself to flight, indiscriminate massacre succeeds to combat; the plain is strewn with the corses of the slain: in the headlong rout the coward is forced to valorous deeds; the horseman, pale with terror, pushes into the sea, and mingles with the fleet; then, swimming in disgraceful flight, re-ascends his bark from amidst the waves."* Such were the exploits of Genseric abroad.

In the mean time, it was necessary to place his power at home upon a safe basis, to gather together his resources, to prepare a fleet and to man it, to gain the supremacy of the sea. For this, peace was necessary; and peace he easily obtained. By an understanding with Attila, at which we have already hinted, he precipitated the hordes of the Huns upon the empire of the East, and pledged himself, most probably, to aid the Hun in a "hourra" upon Rome.† Upon this, Theodosius felt himself compelled to put an end to the war with Genseric, lest Constantinople should be taken between two fires. Without the aid of Theodosius, Valentinian could do nothing in the West; and therefore Valentinian also hastened to make peace. By this peace Genseric acquired time to mature his designs, and territorial resources to carry them out. Of all that Rome had held in Africa, the province of Tripolitana alone remained. All things seemed to favour the Vandal king;

A.D. 442.

edition I possess, strangely interprets "pour avoir mal à propos écarté son bouclier," forgetting that sôldiers did not wear their shields on their *right* arms, or that, if they did, in the phrase "pati dextram," the objective case must express that from which the action proceeds to which the previous verb refers.

* Sidon. Apollinaris, Pan. Majoriani, v. 384—422.

† Jornandes, Reb. Get. § 36.

but his plans were interrupted by domestic treason. In the year 443, or in that which followed, a formidable conspiracy broke out, which was only suppressed by such a lavish effusion of the best blood of the nation, that the Vandals, we are told, suffered more from the axe of the executioner than they had done in any of their wars.* This, then, was apparently the cause which hindered the promised coalition between Genseric and Attila; and by reprieving the Western empire for a few short years, gave her destinies into nobler hands than those of either the Vandal or the Hun.

A.D. 444.

Cassiodorus, grandfather of the historian whom Jornandes has abridged, claims the glory of driving the Vandals both from Italy and the mainland. But it is not likely that on this occasion Genseric meant to effect a permanent occupation. He struck, and recoiled to strike again with more effect. To these and similar causes we must ascribe the fact that, though perpetually engaged in predatory expeditions, it was not until the year 455 that Genseric actually appeared in arms before the gates of Rome; and the emperor, on his part, was too much engrossed with the Huns, who lost the great battle of Châlons in 451, to turn his thoughts to the perils which menaced him from Africa. We have already briefly mentioned the miserable court intrigue and the treacherous vengeance of a woman, which brought the barbarian to the fruition of his long-cherished ambition, and to the summit of the Capitol. To the annals of Italy belongs the story of her ancient Queen; how again and again she arose, after every fall, and wrapt around her faded form the imperial purple, though pierced in a hundred places by the barbarian dagger, rent by faction and trampled in the dust. No enemy more fierce, cruel, and rapacious than the Vandals had ever appeared beside the Tiber; never had the great

A.D. 455.

* Prosper., p. 196.

metropolitan city been despoiled of a larger portion of that wealth and magnificence which she herself had gathered from every known country in the civilized or uncivilized world. But, after all, the Vandal was a less formidable enemy than the Ostrogoth and the Lombard; for the latter were ever at her doors, ever prepared to establish a kingdom of Italy; while the home of the former was beyond the seas. The real injury inflicted upon Rome by the successful raid of the Vandals, was the violation of her sanctity and the loss of her prestige. It is true that Alaric had stormed her gates and plundered her treasures half a century before; but since that eventful day, Alaric had perished by a sudden retribution, and Attila had recoiled before the shadow of the great Name; and the Gothic sword had compensated for its irreverent violence, by triumphs, won in the name of Rome in Southern Gaul and beyond the Pyrenees; and Aëtius had once more wooed victory to the Roman eagles in the "battle of the nations" upon the plains of Champagne.

Rome, therefore, though no longer a living power, by the terror of her memory, like the corpse of the Cid or the dead Douglas, might still have opened a pathway through her enemies on the battle-field. "It was Genseric," to borrow an expression from a French writer, "who taught the nations to know, by a language expressed in acts most terrible and most intelligible, that the expiring lion has no longer claws, and that a giant in swaddling-clothes (*un géant en maillot*) is nothing more than an infant somewhat larger than the rest." A corse in its winding-sheet would have been a fitter image; for the life and strength of Rome were gone, instead of being as yet to be developed. The nations were not slow to learn the lesson. The Visigoths seized upon Spain and Southern Gaul; the Burgundians firmly planted themselves in her western and central districts; the Franks began to make themselves masters of the North. In Italy, Ricimer, a barbarian, was for fifteen years master of the

situation, imposing and deposing Roman emperors at his pleasure. These strange events have been recounted in their proper place, and do not require repetition here.

Genseric, who paved the way for them all, upon his return made himself master, as might have been expected, of the remainder of Africa. He reigned as undisputed lord, from the Straits of Gibraltar to the frontiers of Cyrenaica. But it was mainly upon the Mediterranean that he now exerted his military force; for here was at once the last remaining support of the Empire, and the best resource for carrying out his own future designs. The timber of the Atlas, and the cunning shipwrights of the African province, gave to the captors of Rome and Carthage an excellently equipped fleet, which rendered them masters of the midland waters, and struck terror into all the islands and cities on the coast which still retained allegiance to the name of Rome. Avitus, who had been seduced from peace and happiness in Auvergne to the misery and peril of the imperial purple, was not the man to organize resistance to such active enemies. It was in vain that Majorian, his successor, after a romantic visit in disguise to the capital of his enemy, attempted to descry the weak points in his political position.* Upon his return to the forces which he was amassing, he found that the deceit of Genseric had been more deep and successful than his own. It had tampered with his Gothic confederates; and the treachery of these men cost him his fleet. Majorian himself was but the puppet of Ricimer, as the Empire was the plaything of the barbarous races. He fell by the hand of an assassin, and at the command of Ricimer, near Tortona, A.D. 461. Genseric, there can be little doubt, subtle in policy as formidable in war, was more or less concerned with all the barbarian movements by which the domination of Rome was finally cast off, and Italy subjected to the Northern sword. He intrigued with Attila and his

* Lecture V. p. 256.

Huns, as we have already seen; he brought the Alani upon Majorian while the latter was indulging in a vision of conquering Africa, and engaged in listening to the premature congratulations of official flattery, which the pen of Sidonius was ever ready to pour forth; he pushed the Pannonian Ostrogoths upon the Greek empire in 459 and 462, and paralyzed thereby the political action of the Byzantine court upon the West; he comforted and abetted, if he did not entirely instigate, Euric, the Visigoth king, in his final defalcation, which, in 473, stripped the Empire of all that remained to it in Spain and in Gaul, of Provence, Auvergne, and Narbonne. In the mean time, courted by Leo in the East, and by Ricimer himself in the West, despite of several local disasters, the necessary results of wide-spread and adventurous expeditions, he maintained the prestige of the Vandal name, and assumed, perhaps, for a time, the position of the most powerful potentate in the world. The peculiar genius of the leader and his people, less distinguished for military qualities than that of many among the new contemporaneous nationalities, were there not such strong evidence to the contrary, might almost tempt us to ascribe their origin to the Slavic rather than the Teutonic stock. The war, for instance, between the Franks and Romans upon the one part, who were eager to avenge the assassination of Majorian, and the Visigoths and Burgundians on the other, who stood forth as the defenders of Ricimer, was fostered by Vandal intrigue, and enabled Genseric to make himself master both of Corsica and Sardinia. It nearly, also, gave him Sicily, the necessary complement of his conquests, and the great object of his ambitious designs; for, now that Alexandria and Carthage had been alienated, Sicily alone could feed the Italian peninsula. The Italians themselves, wearied with the revolutions in the palace, which were revived at the pleasure of one who was an Arian in religion and a barbarian in blood, threw themselves, as a last

resource, upon the emperor of the East, and requested him to patronize and support an emperor who was connected with his own court — Anthemius, grandson of that Anthemius who had administered affairs at Byzantium during the minority of Theodosius the Younger. Leo, therefore, the Eastern emperor, flattered by the application, supported the claims of Anthemius. Genseric naturally supported, or more probably suggested, the candidateship of Olybrius, not only because he could not tolerate any combination between the East and West, but because, also, Olybrius was the husband of Placidia, daughter of Valentinian, whose other daughter, Eudocia, had been married to Huneric, his own son. These matters, however, have been already narrated, with more minuteness, in a former lecture.* The Vandal king commenced hostilities by his usual forays on the coast. But the court of Constantinople had not yet reached the military decrepitude of Rome. A menacing embassy was sent to Carthage, which declared in express terms to Genseric, that, if he did not desist, the united forces of the two emperors would be directed against him. Genseric still continued his opposition. A formidable armament was collected to vindicate the majesty of what was, for the last time, a combination of the forces, moral and material, which once obeyed the summons of Rome. A fleet of eleven hundred and thirteen galleys, an army of one hundred and thirteen thousand men, sailed from Constantinople to conquer Carthage, and expel the Vandals from Africa. The means were assuredly more than sufficient for the purpose. Sardinia and Tripoli at once succumbed. The army was close upon the capital. The Vandal troops are described as demoralized in spirit and greatly reduced in number. The Byzantine historian, in the usual vainglorious style of his court, is certain that, had Basiliscus, the imperial general, advanced at once, the enemy

* See Lecture V.

must have been swept from land and sea; but, by one of those sudden and singular revolutions of fortune which characterize the history of these times, in a few hours all is changed. Genseric obtains a truce for three days; he gets up a fleet of fireships, precipitates them upon the great Roman armament, and assails them fiercely under cover of the confusion. The immense armada, which had cost 130,000 lbs. of gold, is utterly scattered and destroyed, like its modern antitype, to which it has been frequently compared. The success of Genseric is, of course, ascribed to treason; though, in this case, it is difficult to fix upon the traitor. Procopius makes no scruple of directly accusing the commander, Basiliscus; but no evidence is brought forward which justifies such a charge. Basiliscus gallantly clung to the wreck of his armament, and, after obtaining reinforcements, reappeared in the Sicilian waters, and avenged himself by defeating a Vandal fleet. Idatius, the Spanish chronicler, with more plausibility, ascribes the victory of the Vandals to the treasonable complicity of Aspar and Ardaburus, Arian Goths of distinction and high command in the expedition. At this distance of time it is impossible to do more than vaguely speculate upon the amount of sympathy which identity in religion, and close communion in blood and political interest, may have produced among the barbarians beneath the Roman banners and the enemy against whom they were brought into the field. But whether with or without assistance in the hostile camp, the Vandal king evidently overreached his victorious foe, as he did once before, when on the point of perishing in Spain. It is not surprising, therefore, that ancient opinion should have ascribed the successes of the Vandals to policy, meaning thereby stratagem and deceit, rather than to valour in the open combat. Not only were the Vandals saved for the moment, but the recoil of its long-meditated blow was nearly fatal to the Eastern court. Genseric united himself

with the Ostrogoth chieftains, who, by a sudden *coup*, nearly made themselves masters of Constantinople. The capital, however, was saved from the Goths by the same Basiliscus who has been accused of conspiring with them. But he and the emperor Leo were altogether incompetent to arrest the progress of the Vandal ravages elsewhere. In Italy, the long crumbling relics of the fabric of imperial power at last collapsed. On the 23rd of August, 476, Odoacer placed his foot upon the steps of the throne, and proclaimed to the world that the Empire of Rome had passed away. Leo died at Constantinople in hopeless depression: nothing was left for his successor Zeno but to make peace with the Vandals, who were ravaging the coasts of Epirus, and had sacked Nicopolis. The terms of the treaty remain. We will give them, because they explain the limits and power of the Vandal kingdom at what may be regarded the period of its highest prosperity. The Vandals were to remain masters of all Northern Africa, from the frontiers of Cyrenaica to the shores of the Atlantic Ocean: the Balearic isles, Sicily, Corsica, and Sardinia, were to be theirs: perpetual peace was henceforth to subsist between the Eastern emperors and the Vandal king: an amicable arrangement between the courts of Constantinople and Carthage should determine all claims based upon the dowry of Eudocia, wife of Huneric, and all possible disputes arising out of the commercial relations of the two countries. A fair and strong dominion, a brilliant political prospect! and yet, in a few years, not only the Vandal dominion, but the civilization of Northern Africa, had passed away from the face of the earth.* The treaty was managed on the part of the Eastern emperor by Severus, a man whose virtues were worthy of the ancient days of Rome. To the respect inspired by his personal character must be ascribed

A.D. 471.

* Procopius, Bell. Vand. i. 7.

the favourable terms obtained for the Catholic clergy from such an unpromising negotiator as the Vandal king. The churches were reopened; the bishops recalled; the captives permitted to return to Italy, upon payment of a stipulated ransom. Genseric pressed barbaric presents upon the noble-minded ambassador. "The only gift I can consistently with my duty accept," was the reply, "is the permission to redeem from slavery, at my own expense, my countrymen who have been made captive by the sword."

Henceforward the brief annals of the Vandal race are simply a tale of disaster and decay. The great, though savage and remorseless mind, which had given organization to the rude elements of barbaric strength existing in his tribe, and breathed into that tribe the wonderful spirit, undefinable in words, which is a national life, was now about to pass away, and none other arose to supply its place. If individual genius could create nationality, the genius of Genseric might perhaps have achieved the task. Of the great Theban commander who fought at Leuctra and Mantinea, it has been said, that he made the glory of his country by his life, and destroyed it by his death; that

> "her warlike pride
> Rose by his arm, and perish'd at his side."

Of Genseric, king of the Vandals, the same assertion may be made, in a sense still more emphatic and complete. When he assumed the supremacy, the Vandals were surrounded by powerful enemies, enfeebled by their devotion to the pursuits of peace, in an age and in a country where war and the arts of war were everywhere paramount; nor could they adopt the ordinary expedient of barbarian tribes when hard pressed by famine or the sword. Migration was impossible. Europe had been already traversed; no more unravaged lands lay before them; the broad waters of the Mediterranean, as they

washed up against the Spanish shores, interposed a barrier to their further progress, and denied them a refuge from the vengeance alike of their natural enemy and their hereditary rival,—the Roman and the Goth. But at the death of their daring and successful leader, the Vandals were lords of a dominion which promised to assume a position among the great powers of the world: they had beaten the Roman in Spain, and supplanted him in his favourite province of Africa; they had, for the moment, far outstripped the Goth in the race for political power and consolidation which had now arisen among the new barbarian nationalities; they had set their foot upon the neck of the imperial mistress of the earth; they had sacked Rome, scared Byzantium, despite of her impregnable position; scattered her armaments, and swept the Mediterranean. Yet, within a few years, these traditions were disgraced, the brilliant promise falsified, and this solid power shattered into fragments which were never again to unite. Genseric died January 25th, 477. Like Augustus, he desired to secure the stability of the fabric of his own creation by the testamentary provisions of his will. With one only of these we are acquainted, and its wisdom, though intended to remedy an acknowledged evil, is perhaps open to dispute. As we shall see, in reviewing the history of the Merovingian and Carlovingian Franks, the common practice among the barbarians of dividing an inheritance between the existing male children of the deceased, was a fruitful source of rivalry, bloodshed, and political weakness. Genseric devised a somewhat singular remedy for the mischief produced by this practice. He determined, by his last testament, that the eldest male member of the royal family for the time being should always sit upon the Vandal throne.* Thus, if the brothers of Huneric, the elder son, were disappointed of

A.D. 477.

* Procopius, Bell. Vand. i. 7.

the usual share in the royal heritage upon their father's death, they were consoled by the reflection, that at the death of Huneric himself, they would supplant his sons by the right of seniority. The consequences may be easily conjectured. Huneric contrived to make away with most of the heirs who would inherit on this principle, in favour of his own child Hilderic; and so "thorough" were his measures, that Hilderic eventually succeeded to the throne without dispute, though entirely Grecized by education and long residence in Constantinople, and more than suspected of a leaning to the dogma of Athanasius.

The history of the Vandal decadence under the successors of Genseric is not pleasant to contemplate or to relate. As the constitution of an individual distinguished for great physical strength, rapidly deteriorates when his previous exertions are relaxed, so it often is with the military strength of nations. The Vandals, perpetually fighting battles upon the Mediterranean waters, swooping upon the provinces of both empires, laying siege to cities, and defeating the armies sent to relieve them, resembled a victorious athlete in the full perfection of his training and his powers. But the same Vandals, sunk in the lap of Carthaginian luxury, amid the meretricious allurements of that civilization which they once had deemed it their special mission to destroy, debased by the passion for spectacle, by the soft and splendid clothing, the rich viands, the wines, and the courtesans of Rome, may be compared to the athlete who has quitted the arena for a life of profligate indulgence and debauchery.* Both illustrate the old maxim, "Corrup-

* It is thus that Procopius describes the new-born luxury of the Vandals:—*Ἐξ ὅτου Λιβύην ἔσχον, βαλανείοις τε οἱ σύμπαντες ἐπεχρῶντο ἐς ἑκάστην ἡμέραν, καὶ τραπέζῃ ἅπασιν πληθούσῃ, ὅσα δὴ γῆ τε καὶ θάλασσα ἥδιστά τε καὶ ἄριστα φέρει. Ἐχρυσοφόρουν δὲ ὡς ἐπὶ πλεῖστον καὶ Μηδικὴν ἐσθῆτα ἣν νῦν Σηρικὴν καλοῦσιν ἀμπεχόμενοι, ἐν τε θεάτροις καὶ ἱπποδρομίοις καὶ τῇ ἄλλῃ εὐπαθείᾳ,*

tio optimi est pessima." The great military activity of the nation which, under Genseric, had battled for fifty years against Rome, sank suddenly into inaction, and none of its leaders had the wisdom to launch their warriors once more into a new sphere of activity. This is the more remarkable, because such a sphere might have been found at their very doors, and subsequently was found by the perspicacious genius of Justinian or his generals. The restless and turbulent tribes of the Moors had been a thorn in the side of the Roman empire, and they continued to be a thorn in the side of the Vandal kings. Yet the latter failed to see the immense advantage to be gained, moral as well as political, by the prosecution of sustained operations against them, and the erection of forts upon their frontier. There was yet another cause which materially contributed to the rapid decadence of the Vandal power. The frightful disputes, or, indeed, the actual conflicts between the Arian and orthodox parties in the Church, rent the very vitals of the state, and brought about its dismemberment. It is natural to contrast the policy of Genseric in this respect with that of the great Italian Ostrogoth, Theodoric; nor can we contemplate the two without pronouncing a judgment in favour of the latter. Both were Arian princes, both had to deal with a strong Catholic element in their newly-organized empire. But Theodoric had the more difficult task, for he was involved in personal relations with the metropolis of Catholic Christendom, and had the all-powerful prestige of Rome for his antagonist. Only ten years were left to the successors of Theodoric to carry out his policy and consolidate their power, before they were assailed by the whole force of the Eastern empire; more than half a century

καὶ πάντων μάλιστα κυνηγεσίοις, τὰς διατριβὰς ἐποιοῦντο. Καὶ σφίσιν ὀρχησταὶ καὶ μίμοι ἀκούσματά τε συχνὰ καὶ θεαμάτων ὅσα μουσικά τε καὶ ἀξιοθέατα ἐν ἀνθρώποις ξυμβαίνει εἶναι.—Bell. Vand. i. 6.

elapsed between the death of Genseric and the appearance of Belisarius upon the African shores. Yet, despite of its distant situation, its special advantages, and accumulated means of defence, the Vandal kingdom and its Arian church were overthrown by the Greeks in the short space of three months, while it took the same Greeks twenty years to eradicate the Ostrogoths from Italy. Fanaticism, we may gather from Salvian and others, was a prominent feature in the national character of the Vandals. "Against whom are we to go?" said some of his officers to Genseric, when starting upon an expedition. "Against those with whom God is wroth," was the reply.* In the spirit of fanatics, they accepted their mission, to slay, burn, and destroy, as the instruments of God's vengeance to punish the crimes of Rome; in the same spirit they appear to have undertaken an Arian propagandism which brought them into contact with a power more mighty than their own, and, chafing at opposition, their zeal attained a fervour which rendered them incapable of toleration, charity, policy, or forethought; and they fell, as they deserved to fall. There was this excuse for their blindness. The fall of the empire of the West seemed doubtless, in their eyes, to involve the fall of Latin Christianity. The Burgundians, the Visigoths, the Ostrogoths, the Sueves, were, like themselves, partisans of Arius. The Frankish battle-axe had not yet become arbiter of the destinies of Italy, and the ignominious defeat of the great Byzantine armada removed even the remotest apprehension of peril coming from the East. Yet it was from the East that the storm broke upon them, and they were utterly unable to protect themselves against its fury. With a brief glance at its coming, and its effects, we must close this lecture. Huneric succeeded his father in the year 476: he sat upon the Vandal throne until the close of 484. The incidents of his

A.D. 476—484.

* Procopius, Bell. Vand. i. 5.

reign may briefly be summed up. The quarrels and conflicts of the reigning family, the persecution of the Catholics, the increasing brigandage of the Moors, exhibit the feebleness of the government, and the gradually deteriorating condition of the people. The negotiations with the court of Constantinople, consequent upon the treaty already mentioned, prepared the way for the interference of the strong and politic Justinian in African affairs. The provision made by Genseric in his will, insured assassination, or murder disguised under legal forms, for all possible claimants of the throne. Accordingly, Huneric almost immediately proceeded to make away with his sister-in-law, his nephews, and many other members of his family; nor was the sanguinary process stayed except by his own decease. With respect to the hostility and gradual encroachments of the Moors, we have information which shows the singular uniformity subsisting through all ages in the character of those wild tribes; in their way of life, and method of warfare. Assailing their enemy simultaneously at several points, and always falling back before serious and solidly-organized resistance, they wearied out the Vandals by years of this intangible warfare, and pushed their conquests so far, that the later rulers of the latter nation were in danger of seeing their dominion confined to the old proconsular province. With the Catholics, the earlier relations of Huneric had been exceedingly amicable. He permitted them to re-open their churches, to celebrate divine service in accordance with their own ritual, and even to elect a metropolitan bishop of Carthage. But he was resolute in his refusal to permit proselytism among his own subjects. The Catholic clergy were as resolute in their endeavours to attempt it; and hence arose a conflict of persecution on the one side, and of unyielding defiance on the other, which, as has been already said, insured the success of Belisarius when he appeared as the champion of Catholic rights against Arian injustice and oppression. One curious

feature in the contest affords a graphic picture of the times. The Vandal king forbade his subjects to enter the Catholic churches; he strictly prohibited Catholic ministers from receiving within their walls an individual clad in the Vandal garb. The Catholics replied, that all garbs were admissible into the house of God, and that, so far as they were concerned, none should be excluded. The king rejoined by placing soldiers at the entrance of the churches, armed with a long pole terminated by an iron comb. When a worshipper approached clad in the Vandal garb, and wearing the long hair which was still the cherished indication of free Teutonic blood, he was assailed by the sentinel, and his hair torn out by the roots with this formidable implement.*

The measures of Huneric did not stop here. When making his concessions to the Catholics at the instance of of his sister-in-law Placidia, and Zeno, the Eastern emperor, he had not unreasonably stipulated for the accordance of similar privileges to the Arians in the dominions of the latter. These concessions Zeno was either unwilling or unable to ratify. Exasperated by what he considered the unfair dealing of his Catholic rival, and the insolent pretensions of his own Catholic subjects, Genseric closed their churches and banished five thousand of them among the Moors. The edict, addressed in Latin, by "Hunerix, Rex Vandalorum et Alanorum," to "all the nations subject to his authority," against the "Homoousioi," or Athanasian Catholics, still exists, and is one of the most important and interesting documents of its class. The churches of the Catholics were shut up, their worship prohibited, their ecclesiastical property confiscated, and their metropolitan, with his bishops, banished to Corsica or the most barbarous districts of the African mainland. This edict was to take effect in the middle of the year 484. Huneric died in the following September, "eaten of worms,"

A.D. 484.

* Victor Vitensis, ii. 14.

and recalling to the orthodox sufferers under his persecution, the fate of Sylla and the blaspheming king of the Jews. They might well be excused for imagining a special intervention of Providence in their behalf. During the last few months of the tyrant's reign, all the apparatus of pagan persecution had been revived against them; the scourges of steel wire, the horrible iron pincers and knives, the plates of heated metal, even the wild beasts of the amphitheatre. The executioner and the Arian priest were everywhere: gibbets and crosses lined the roads. Gundamund, who succeeded to the throne, materially modified these tyrannical ordinances. Throughout his reign, and that of the two monarchs who followed him, the Catholics, though still regarded with jealousy, once more regained the exercise of their privileges. In the year 487, we find deliberations held at Rome upon the conduct of those who had lapsed under Arian persecution. The Roman Church, with that rigidity of practice and inexorable will which has been so long the secret of her triumphs, visited the guilty with the severest retribution. A life-long penance alone could obtain communion for ecclesiastics upon their death-bed. The laity were treated with proportionate sternness. Such were the means by which Rome finally subdued Arianism, and has since subdued so many scarce less formidable foes. Her whole history has been an illustration of this policy. Is it likely she should change it now?

A.D. 487.

The reign of Gundamund, which lasted until 496, and that of Trasamund, which lasted until 523, present no special subjects of interest, except so far as the relations of these monarchs with the Ostrogoths assist us to understand what is otherwise unintelligible; how, namely, the Vandals of Africa suffered a kindred people to perish in Italy by the sword of a common enemy, and so paved the way for their own destruction. Trasamund, the Vandal ruler, had married Amalafreda, the sister

A.D. 496—523.

of Theodoric, the great Ostrogoth king of Italy. Upon her husband's death, Amalafreda, a woman of haughty and ambitious spirit, and intolerant of a private station, conspired against Hilderic, the new king, who had seized the throne in agreement with the testamentary regulation of the founder of the dynasty. The authority of Genseric, and his royal blood, which ran in Hilderic's veins, were too strong for the alien queen. Her party were routed, she herself was pursued into exile, captured, and imprisoned. While Theodoric lived, his world-wide fame and influence protected his sister; but immediately upon his death, the unfortunate Gothic princess was brought forth from prison and beheaded. A large number of the nobility of her nation, who had accompanied her to Africa upon her marriage, shared her fate. The effusion of so much Gothic blood awakened the ire and indignation of their kinsmen beyond the seas. Nothing but the want of a fleet prevented the Ostrogoths from taking immediate vengeance. But the cruel wrong rankled in their hearts; and when Justinian meditated his fatal blow against the Vandal empire, he received valuable counsel, refuge for his fleets, and the material aid of an excellent cavalry, from the very men whose union with their compatriots of German origin might have foiled his carefully-planned enterprise.

But it is time to speak of the causes from which this enterprise more directly sprang. Hilderic, grandson of Genseric, was educated, as has been said, at Constantinople. There he had acquired Greek tastes, and was honoured by the friendship of Justinian. This, indeed, recommended him but little to his compatriots, for Justinian was the sworn enemy of all heretics in general, and of Arians in particular. Nothwithstanding this, his grandfather's name obtained for him the throne. It could not secure it for him: for this, personal qualities were needed which he did not possess. He hated the mention of

anything connected with warfare; he was said to shiver at the clash of arms. His campaigns were, therefore, vicariously carried on by a general whom common report designated as the Achilles of the Vandals. The Vandal Achilles, however, did not justify his name, and was shamefully defeated by the Moors. Gelimer, a brave and skilful leader, was, on the Vandal principles of inheritance, heir-apparent to the throne. He took advantage of the occasion, led his troops against the victors, and avenged the dishonour of the Vandal arms. His soldiers proclaimed him king upon the field of battle. He soon practically asserted his authority by imprisoning Hilderic, and taking possession of the seat of government. Justinian, indignant at the deposition of his early friend and complacent ally, immediately dispatched a menacing embassy to Carthage, demanding his restoration. The embassy was treated with neglect; but Justinian was, as yet, unprepared for war, and tried the effect of a second message, in which he requested that Gelimer and his two nephews should be sent to Constantinople. Gelimer haughtily answered, "that the Vandal nation had deposed Hilderic, in the undoubted exercise of its right; that he himself had occupied the throne as its legitimate heir; and that if the Greek violated the treaty which Zeno had concluded, he and his people would know how to defend their rights." Justinian was infuriated, and at once resolved on war. His councillors by no means participated in their master's zeal, and Procopius, to whom we owe the whole narrative, records the arguments for and against the invasion of Africa, with a minuteness very interesting at a period, which, like the present, is so frequently occupied with kindred topics. But we must pass them over. A dream which visited Justinian, really or in pretence, and the more substantial assistance afforded by the treason of Godas, governor of Sardinia, overcame the scruples of the emperor's advisers, and brought affairs to a crisis. The

A.D. 531.

illustrious Belisarius, already distinguished in Persian warfare, was appointed to command the new armament. It was composed of ten thousand infantry and five thousand cavalry. A fleet of five hundred vessels and twenty thousand mariners conveyed this army to the shores of Africa, at the very spot where Cæsar had landed upon his African expedition,—a place called Caputvada, on the confines of the provinces of Byzacene and Tripolitana. This place was selected because the last-mentioned district had lately been acquired from the Vandals by the revolt of a Roman officer, and offered a secure retreat upon Cyrenaica and Egypt, in case of disaster. Procopius, who was secretary to the general, was, it seems, determined by another dream, in which he beheld men carrying earth and the flowers it bore into the palace of Belisarius, to accompany the favourite of fortune to the war.* His account of the expedition affords us an insight into the character and constitution of what still was called a Roman army. Under the old eagles had now crowded the various populations of the world,—Greeks, Germans, Sarmatians, and Orientals; the Goth, with his long lance and formidable broad-sword; the Alani, covered from head to foot with curious mail, formed of bones, and resembling scale-armour; the riders of the Asiatic desert, swarthy, mis-shapen Huns, and Parthians, wielders of the far-famed Parthian bow; the Syrians, bearing ponderous maces of iron, which crushed helm and cuirass at a stroke; the Armenians, with their broad bucklers, and sabres of double edge, which seem to have resembled the modern yataghan. The maintenance of discipline among such an heterogeneous army, and their judicious combination in action, a task greater than that achieved by Alexander, by Cæsar, or even by Hannibal, is no small proof of the moral courage and military genius of Belisarius. Before quitting the Dardanelles, he hung up two Huns mast high, who, in a drunken fit, had murdered a comrade,

* Bell. Vand. i. 12.

and when their savage and irritable countrymen showed symptoms of insubordination, he assembled the whole army, and addressed them in an admirable speech. "You see," he said, "what has been the punishment of these ruffians. For my own part, I am determined to do my duty. But I will permit no man, though he be the bravest warrior of the army, to carry into battle against the enemy hands which are not pure and innocent of crime. Valour which is not accompanied by justice cannot possibly be victorious."* To these principles, thus boldly proclaimed, he inflexibly adhered, and to them he owed his very singular success.

On the 22nd of September, three months after their quitting Constantinople, the armament first landed upon the African continent. It was immediately directed upon Carthage. A small place named Syllectum was captured by the advanced guard; and here Belisarius had the opportunity of proclaiming to the people of the province, that he came not as their enemy, but as their liberator from the tyranny of the Vandals. The excellent discipline observed by the invading force, and the presence of the fleet upon their right flank, rendered it easy for them to advance as far as Decimum, about ten miles from Carthage. Here was some difficult ground; a defile, salt marshes, and hills of moderate elevation, running inward from the coast. At this spot Gelimer had made his arrangements to cut his enemies to pieces, or drive them into the sea. Three *corps d'armée*, headed by himself and his brothers, were intended to assail them at different points. But the excellent dispositions of Belisarius, who had protected his front and flank with chosen troops, and the accidental delays which almost always occur in movements so concerted, frustrated the plans of Gelimer, and caused the discomfiture of the two divisions commanded by his brothers. The dead body of Ammatas was left upon the field, and

A.D. 533.

* Bell. Vand. i. 12.

John the Armenian, with the Greek vanguard, chased the Vandal fugitives to the gates of Carthage. Gelimer, however, himself, with the main body, obtained some success,—a success so alarming to Procopius, that he does not hesitate to say, that Belisarius and all his army were on the verge of destruction, and that the subsequent defeat of Gelimer is solely to be ascribed to the judicial blindness which prevented him from availing himself of his advantage.* "Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat," he repeats, with more piety than confidence in the genius of his commander. But Belisarius, with his main body, had not yet been engaged; they were strongly posted in a fortified camp; they were animated with an excellent spirit; and their comrades had been already victorious. There is no reason, humanly speaking, to believe that they would have been beaten; and it is surely more reasonable to ascribe the result to the general government of the God of battles, than to claim any special intervention on their behalf. The Vandals, at any rate, were seized with panic, and fell back, not upon their capital, but in the direction of Numidia. Carthage lay exposed to the invader. It was night when Belisarius reached the gates, and the inhabitants were prepared with torches to welcome him into the streets; but, dreading a surprise, he bivouacked outside the walls. On the morrow, the festival of St. Cyprian, the patron saint of Carthage, Belisarius, the representative of Rome and the champion of Catholic Christianity, amid the thundering acclamations of the inhabitants, passed through the capital of Africa, and the central seat of Arian power, ascended the Palatium, and seated himself in Gelimer's royal throne. At the same moment, the Roman fleet was seen to double Cape Carthage, whence it passed onward to cast anchor in the Tunisian lake, which formed the spacious harbour of the town.†

The capital was in the hands of the Greeks, who checked

* Bell. Vand. i, 19. † *Ibid.* i. 21.

pillage, and behaved with studied moderation. But the Vandal king was naturally determined to strike another blow for his empire and his faith. He recalled Tsason, his brother, who had been dispatched to reduce the rebel Godas, and collected the whole force of his nation for a final effort, about three months after the capture of Carthage, and in the middle of December.* The battle which decided the fate of Africa was fought at a spot called Tricameron. on the banks of a small perennial rivulet, about eighteen miles from Carthage. Procopius gives us all particulars, and, after the approved manner of the ancients, reports verbatim the speeches of Gelimer and his brother. They contain the stock arguments and exhortations proper for such an occasion, and are only remarkable for the statement of the king, that his troops were ten times more numerous than those of his enemy. As this would increase their number to something considerably beyond one hundred thousand men, we must suspect an exaggeration, either on the part of Gelimer, to sustain the confidence of his soldiers, or on that of Procopius, to magnify the exploits of his countrymen. The battle was at first bravely disputed: Tsason repelled three several times the cavalry, who charged again and again under John the Armenian. A last effort, supported by the lancers who formed the body-guard of Belisarius, was successful. The heroic Tsason was left dead on the field; the whole Vandal front gave way, and the army took refuge in the imperfectly-intrenched camp, where they had placed their women and treasures. But by this time the Greek infantry had crossed the rivulet, and advanced with steady and serried front behind the victorious horsemen of the Armenian. At the sight, Gelimer lost heart; he mounted his horse, and, without any communication with his officers, fled from the field and the doomed fortunes of his people. When no orders came from the royal tent, and the king could nowhere be found, the

* Procopius, Bell. Vand. ii. 3.

Vandal camp was thrown into confusion and dismay. Resistance was at once abandoned; the soldiers fled in all directions; and the army of Belisarius won, without further conflict, the accumulated treasures which the Vandals had carried with them from Carthage, but had lacked the courage to defend. The historian speaks with astonishment of the gold and the silver, the wealth and splendour of the spoils which so many years of successful plunder had torn from every province of the Empire to adorn the barbaric homes of these northern pirates. The conquerors were intoxicated with their good fortune, and became so utterly disorganized in the pursuit of hidden riches, or beauty, that, had the enemy returned, they might have been slaughtered to a man. For five days and nights, John the Armenian pursued the fugitive king. Unhappily, this gallant cavalry officer met the fate of the Red King in the New Forest, being accidentally pierced by an arrow which had been discharged at a bird. His death and the consequent delay saved Gelimer for the time, and enabled him to take refuge in the inaccessible sierras which surround Hippona, the modern town of Bona. Belisarius, who had followed him thus far, determined to return to Carthage, in order to reduce the outlying islands and provinces of the Vandal empire. This sojourn at Hippona, however, had not been unprofitable; for he contrived to capture there many Vandal nobles, and all the treasures which Gelimer had intrusted to Boniface for transmission into Spain, whither, as to the land of his fathers, he seems to have meditated a return. Besieged by Pharas, an officer of Belisarius, with several of his nobles, among the Mauritanian mountains, he endured the bitterest privations. Pharas offered to him terms, which are worth notice, because they disclose the character of the Greek court and the policy of the Greek empire. The emperor, it was suggested, would confer upon him the dignity of Patrician, give him some distingushed office about his own person, and a handsome pen-

sion, guaranteed upon property in land. It was not, however, without enduring still bitterer humiliation in his own person, and witnessing the cruel sufferings of the women and young children, that Gelimer at last surrendered. He was transported to Carthage, and received there by Belisarius, March, 534. It is related that the captive prince burst A.D. 534. into laughter upon being introduced to the Roman general; but it is not easy to say whether the laugh proceeded from the aberration of an overtaxed intellect, or from a sudden sense of his own folly, the mockery of fortune, and the instability of all human things. Belisarius was recalled, as is well known, by the mean jealousy of Justinian; but he bore with him to Constantinople the once formidable king and nobility of a conquered empire, crowds of captives, and cartloads of treasure. The city of Constantine had supplanted her great western rival, had far surpassed her in the beauties of nature, in the advantages of situation, in the elaborate creations of art;—but one thing was wanting,—the long glories of the Triumph, as it swept up the Sacred Way, and scaled the steps of the Capitol, graced by the treasures of vanquished nations and the forms of their fettered kings, and accompanied by the pealing acclamations of a great people,—these things had been the imperial dower of Rome; but, as yet, they had been denied to the professed inheritress of her traditions and her power. It was, therefore, with no common exultation that the Greek beheld the mimic pageant of Belisarius pass on its way through the streets of Constantinople, from the barriers of the Hippodrome to the gorgeous throne erected for Justinian and Theodora. Nor was the procession unsuited to recall the ancient pomp of the old heroic days—the more substantial trophies which commemorated the victories of the Republican generals or the Cæsars of the Empire. There were to be seen the riches which Genseric had rifled from Carthage, from Rome herself, and from many a subject

province; thrones of gold; chariots once elaborately adorned for the service of imperial ladies; glittering heaps of jewels; golden vases, and all the massive plate which had passed from Italian palaces to palaces of equal splendour beyond the seas; even the sacred vessels which Vespasian and Titus had transported from Jerusalem to Rome. Nor was there wanting the more august spectacle of a captive king, who, clad in a robe of scarlet, and accompanied by his kinsmen, repeated from time to time, yet without sigh or tear, the words of bitter experience wrung from the lips of the Hebrew sage — "Vanity of vanities: all is vanity." The degradation reached its extremest depth, when the unfortunate prince arrived at the elevated platform upon which the emperor was seated, by the side of the royal harlot who shared and disgraced his dignity. There he was stripped of his scarlet robe, and compelled to prostrate himself before a throne upon the steps of which his own heroic ancestor had almost placed his foot.*

This may be regarded as the closing scene of Vandal history. The king, unwilling to renounce his Arian profession, found no favour in the eyes of Justinian, and was refused the dignities which had been promised at his capitulation. The people, drafted into the Greek army, and employed in the perilous Persian campaigns, were gradually consumed by the exigencies of war. The few who remained behind in Africa joined in the formidable revolt of the mercenaries, who, at the instigation, as is supposed, of the Vandal women with whom they had formed a connection proclaimed themselves independent of the Empire, and asserted a right to the lands which they had conquered with their swords. But upon the suppression of the revolt, even this remnant was expelled, with all the Vandal women found in the country. Never was a national extermination more complete. Modern travellers have imagined that

* Procopius, Bell. Vand. ii. 9.

traces of the unfortunate Vandal race may be discovered among the Berbers and other fair-skinned tribes which inhabit part of the Moorish territory; the eye occasionally discerns among the swarthy African troops of France a face which seems to indicate a remote Teutonic origin; but the test of language fails to support any such ethnological theory. The white skin of Europe, and the light-coloured eye, are found in the Ethiopian highlands, as well as upon the upper ridges of the Mauritanian Atlas. The Vandal who left the land of his adoption in the vessels of Belisarius, might have truly sung the plaintive song of the Gael:—

"Cha till, cha till, cha till sin tuile."
We return, we return, we return no more.

LECTURE VIII.

THE ROMAN PROVINCE OF GAUL—THE BURGUNDIANS —THE VISIGOTHS—THE FRANKS.

"Gallia, Italia verius quam provincia."
PLINY, *Hist. Nat.* iii. 4.

"Laudantem tetrico subinde vultu,
Quod Burgundio cantat esculentus,
Infundens acido comam butyro."
SID. APOLL., *Carmen* xii. 5—7.

"In Rhodanum proprios producere fines
Theudoridæ fixum, nec erat pugnare necesse
Sed migrare Getis."
SID. APOLL., *Pan. Aviti*, v. 301—303.

"Mitis depone caput, Sicamber: adora quod incendisti, incende quod adorâsti."—ST. REMI, *apud Greg. Tur.* ii. 34.

SYNOPSIS.—Ethnology of France.—Celts, Greeks, Romans, Germans. —Gaul completely Latinized by the Roman conquest: its unfortunate condition; alleviated by the Church. — Great inroad of Germans, A.D. 406. The BURGUNDIANS: their history and character. — The VISIGOTHS: foundation of their kingdom in Gaul; its history; a personal sketch of its king Theodoric, by Sidonius.—Desire of the Visigoths to restore the Empire in their own name; finally succumb to the FRANKS.—Origin of the Franks; description of them by Sidonius; their early relations with the Roman empire. — Merovius and the Merovingians; their political character.—Clovis; his baptism, wars, and conquests; subdues Burgundians and Visigoths; is made Roman patrician.—The matters principally to be remembered in Merovingian history.—The great Austrasian and Neustrian schism.—The Austrasians attempt to grasp the whole power in their own hands; they succeed in the persons of the Mayors of the Palace.—Origin and nature of the office. — Pepin-le-Vieux. — Dagobert.—The *Rois fainéans.*—Pepin of Heristal consummates the triumph of Austrasia over the Neustrians.—Charles Martel, the actual ruler of France; his active life and renown in war; defeats the Saracens at the battle of Tours; quarrels with the Church; dies.—Pepin-le-Bref; reconciled to the Church; aids the Papacy against the Lombards; obtains the Pope's sanction to dethrone the Merovingian dynasty; bestows the Exarchate on the Pope; dies: his character.

FRANCE is resolvable into its ethnological elements more easily, perhaps, than many other modern nations, if we are

content to pause at a certain stage in the investigation. The basis is undoubtedly Celtic. Gaels, or Gauls, with their kindred Kymri, formed, as we have seen in a former lecture, the first wave of the great living tide which rolled onward from the plateau of Central Asia to the Atlantic sea-board. The first of these two families, in the opinion of their accomplished historian,* exhibit all the most salient features, the special merits and defaults of the race—their most striking personal characteristics. The Kymri, less active, less distinguished for intellectual power, nevertheless possess more solid qualities and greater stability. To them is owing the main support of social classification and order,—the ideas upon which Theocracy and Monarchy rest. As the impact of fresh emigration drove these united tribes ever forwards, it is natural to conjecture that they finally became concentrated in that "land of the West" which so long proclaimed their presence by its name. The same destiny which had pursued them across Europe, awaited them even in their final resting-place. The pressure of new tribes from beyond the Rhine, in search of lands and settlements, and the steadily advancing tread of the Roman legions from the South, drove the Celt at last into the fastnesses of the Armorican peninsula, just as in our own island his kinsmen were driven into the wilds of Cornwall and of Wales. In this isolated spot, strengthened by an immigration of their own race from the Britannic isles, they have contrived to maintain their national type to the present day, despite the aggression of the neighbouring Norman, and that amalgamation of races which civilization is continuously working out in a great country like France. We must not, however, be led into the error of supposing that, with the withdrawal of the Celts into Armorica, the Celtic element was also withdrawn from the general population of Gaul. On the contrary, it continued to underlie the whole, forming a substratum of national

* Thierry, Hist. des Gaulois, Introduction.

character, which all ethnological students, and indeed all careful observers, cannot fail to recognize even now in the modern French. "A Frenchman," says Thierry, "it has been my desire to know, and make others know, a race from which nineteen-twentieths of us Frenchmen descend."*

B.C. 600.

About 600 years before Christ, the advance of the Persian monarchy to the shores of the Ægean Sea drove many of the Asiatic Greeks into the bosom of the Mediterranean, there to seek new fortunes and a new home. Amongst them were the people of Massilia, who founded Marseilles, in Gaul, and, therefore, introduced a Greek colony into what was then an entirely barbarous land. But the actual effect of such an element upon the ethnological type of the whole people, must have been infinitesimally small: it probably resembled that produced by the presence of European factories, in the seventeenth century, upon the coast of Hindostan. Indeed, it would scarcely have deserved mention here, had it not been that many writers have been induced to exaggerate its influence, from the fact that Cæsar mentions the very general use of Greek characters by traders from the interior of the country. But the use of Greek characters does not even imply a knowledge of the Greek language. What Cæsar found existing was probably something analogous to the arrangement made by our missionaries and others, to express, in Roman letters, the rude articulation of savage tribes. Nevertheless, Greek culture and Greek learning must have exercised a certain amount of influence among the people of the southern coast. It is supposed that this connection with Greece imported several Greek words into the French language. There are, I suspect, very few which may not be regarded as having passed through an intermediate channel, or as the ordinary appropriations of modern science.

* Thierry, Hist. des Gaulois, Introduction.

About 51 B.C., Cæsar invaded Gaul. From that invasion we may date the era of its complete Latinization. Long before that period, Roman relations were widely extended over those portions of the country which were coterminous with Italy, or which bordered upon the Mediterranean. But it is to the terrible and exterminating wars waged by the first of the Cæsars, that we must ascribe the triumph of Roman institutions, customs, literature, and language, — a triumph so complete, that it rendered the province, during the latter ages of the Empire, more Roman than Rome itself, and supplied the basis of something more than three-fourths of their language to its future inhabitants. But of this hereafter.

B.C. 51.

This Latinizing process continued, with little interruption, for five successive centuries. German tribes were perpetually crossing the Rhine for raids and forays on the fertile fields which stretched to the westward of the left bank of the river. The practice, we hear, from Cæsar himself, was older than his time. But no permanent settlement was effected before the fifth century of our era. Then the Germans, and more especially the Frank confederation, established themselves in Roman Gaul, and effected the largest and most important alteration in its condition, institutions, manners, and language, which the country has ever received. The character of this revolution it will be the object of the present lecture to describe.

One other large infusion of new blood modified the social condition of France, at a later period in her history. The Scandinavian sea-kings, who, under the names of Danes or Northmen, had fixed their iron grasp upon so many fertile regions, were not induced, by the ties of consanguinity, to spare either the Saxons in England or the Franks in Gaul. They ascended nearly all the rivers of Europe, and often retained permanent possession of their banks: soon as their keels were seen ploughing

the current, and their horns were heard, "no man," says Michelet, "ever looked behind him." During the reigns of the feeble successors of Charlemagne, they succeeded in establishing themselves in France, where they finally won that beautiful province which still bears their name, and from which they passed into our own island, there to establish a dynasty which, directly or indirectly, was dominant for centuries, and contributed almost as much as the earlier Saxon element to determine the type of our national character.

In this ethnological sketch of the constituent parts of the French nation, I have said nothing of the anomalous race found upon the Pyrenean frontier. The Basque tribes offer a problem of the most lively interest to the ethnologist and historian; but in respect of our present purpose, they are not so important; for I cannot regard them as having exercised any large or continuous influence upon the foundation of that living conglomeration which constitutes the French people. In date, they are probably contemporary with the Celts, and may be recognized in the Iberian tribes, whom the latter are said to have driven over the Garonne and the Adour into the mountainous chain which forms the French and Spanish frontier.

But it is time to describe more systematically the outgrowth of modern France from these its historical antecedents.

It is a remark not unfrequently made, that Rome has stamped more palpably her external impress upon Gaul, than even upon Italy itself. The traveller in the South of France sees around him at Arles, at Avignon, and at Nismes, more conspicuous and more interesting relics of the old world of imperial Rome, than he will again behold on the opposite side of the Alps, before the towers of the Eternal City are visible upon the southern horizon. Something analogous occurs in the history of the two nations. The social state of the world under the sceptre of the Cæsars

may be more clearly and minutely traced in the Romanized Gaul of the few first Christian centuries, than in any other country which obeyed their rule. The condition of Italy we have already had occasion to describe; and if that description is correct, it is obviously not in Italy that we ought to seek either the moral or material appliances which constitute a great people and preserve a national life. But Gaul, further removed from the corrupting influence of the capital, continued much longer to exhibit indications of actual physical well-being, political action, and intellectual activity. It would have been a pleasant task to enlarge upon these; but that duty, in one particular conception of it, has been discharged by an accomplished writer who has just passed away from among us. It would perhaps be impossible to find a student of modern history who has not read the lectures of Sir James Stephen, and still more impossible to find one who, having read them, has not yielded to the fascination of their clear and graceful eloquence; but among these lectures, I know of none executed with more masterly skill than that which contains his description of the Romano-Gallic province, during the period to which we have referred. It would, therefore, be useless to go laboriously over the same ground. I shall only state, in brief and general terms, conclusions which, though conscientiously formed from the study of other authorities, for the most part may be verified and illustrated by his remarks. It is scarcely necessary to add, that they should also be compared with the writings of a still greater man, who won his first, and perhaps his brightest laurels, in this very field. I allude, of course, to the invaluable work of a distinguished living statesman, who has played so prominent a part in the destinies of his country and the politics of Europe — the "History of European Civilization," by M. Guizot.

Gaul, as we have already seen, had for many centuries

contended against Italy under Brennus; under Hannibal; in the terrible onslaught of the Teuton and Kymric tribes repelled by Marius; in the long and sanguinary struggle for life and liberty against Cæsar; yet we have also seen that she eventually became more Roman than Rome herself, and exhibited a social aspect so brilliant, in literature, in art, in commerce, in legal learning, in political affairs, that she was not surpassed even by the centre and capital of ancient civilization. The detail of these splendid successes seems to exhibit the portraiture of a happy and prosperous people: but the picture has a darker side. Such things do not prove the presence of that fixedness of purpose and character which is the strength of nations, as well as of men; or of that undefinable sentiment of patriotic virtue which can only consist with the consciousness of a national life, and the functions and duties which a national life implies. The products, material or intellectual, elicited under these, or any other social conditions, however glorious or beneficial they may appear, as they do not spring from this source, are soon discovered "to have no root in them," and wither away. Gaul became a provincial community: she never again was a People; neither, therefore, did she ever acquire that immutability of type and tenacity of life which a People alone can possess. Whatever may have been the external prosperity of the Gallic provincials, in a few years all was changed: their nationality, their civic institutions, their public finances, their social condition, their language, their religion. From the description of Cæsar, it might almost seem that Gaul, in his time, possessed something faintly resembling representative institutions. The diets, or councils, to which he so often refers, were at least the conservators of public spirit and patriotism, even though they perpetuated the mutual animosity of the tribes among whom they existed. Under Roman domination, they passed away, and with them all the feelings of indepen-

dence and self-respect which they might have nurtured and kept alive. But at the beginning of the fifth century, the days of Roman domination were numbered. The Imperial system was breaking up; the barbarians were at hand; Gaul was especially exposed to their assaults, and it was impossible to defend Gaul with the corrupt executive and diminished forces of the Empire. The emperors had recourse to a desperate expedient. "They dared," says Michelet, "to pronounce the word Liberty," at least they attempted to revive the old tradition of the free diet, and to avail themselves of it for the purpose of inducing Gaul to defend herself. The curious and important rescript addressed by Honorius and Theodosius the Younger to the prefect of the Gauls, with this object, may be seen in the pages of Guizot.* But liberty and free institutions were no longer words to conjure with. No spirit now obeyed the spell; it fell powerless upon the denationalized descendants of the men who had fought for freedom against Cæsar for so many years. The provinces and towns refused the benefit; no one would nominate the deputies, no one would go to Arles. Centralization and unity were contrary to the primitive character of all ancient society in the West; the local and municipal spirit reappeared everywhere, and the impossibility of reconstituting a general society or Country became evident. The towns confined themselves each to its own walls and its own affairs, and the Empire fell, because none wished to be of the Empire; because citizens desired to be only of their own city. Of the causes which brought about this social demoralization, we have, in part, spoken elsewhere. In the first place, it fared with Gaul as it generally fares with conquered nations, who throw themselves, with a sort of spurious enthusiasm, into the habits of their victors. They lose what is valuable in their own national type of

A.D. 418.

* Guizot, Lect. ii.

character, and fail to catch what is really true, and strong, and admirable in the character of their newly-adopted models. The Gauls, in ceasing to be Gauls, became very indifferent Romans. The Belgic, or Æduan chief who affected the life of the metropolitan noble, exhibited, in an exaggerated form, all the foibles and more serious errors of the Roman patrician. In Gaul, as in Italy, there was the same luxury and the same slavery; the same abandonment of ancient simplicity, national habits, manners, and traditions; the same absorption of land into large unproductive properties, cultivated for ornament rather than use; the same absenteeism,—one season in the local capital, and another in the fashionable watering-place; while to the odious middle-man, or bailiff, was left the management of those patrimonial estates which, in the days of Cæsar, fostered a numerous band of dependents, and gave strength and grandeur to the great old Gallic houses. And inasmuch as the social condition of Gaul was intimately bound up with these hereditary clanships, or, more properly speaking, entirely depended upon them, the breaking up of these time-honoured ties by the introduction of slave-labour and the destruction of the middle class, was more fatal to the existence of the nation, in any sense of the word which deserved the name, than the corresponding revolution in the more artificially constructed society of Roman Italy. "Latifundia perdidere Italiam,"—the "large-estate system," or, as we should say, the "evictions, have destroyed Italy," says Pliny, in often-quoted words: they quite as certainly destroyed her noblest province. But there were other causes at work equally destructive in their tendency, more particularly in reference to that gradual obliteration of the middle class to which we have just referred, and their provincial working may be most clearly seen in Gaul. Coincidently with the development of imperial government and legislation, there arose a

system of administrative despotism peculiarly grievous for the more prosperous parts of the Empire. "It spread over the Roman world," writes Guizot, "a network of functionaries hierarchically distributed, well linked together, both among themselves and with the imperial court, and solely applied to rendering effective in society the will of power, and in transferring to power the tributes and energies of society."* The evil, always oppressive, became immensely aggravated when Diocletian introduced a sort of oriental absolutism into the functions of civil government, and constituted an almost Persian system of administration throughout the Empire. Gaul, it is true, possessed a greatness of her own, a municipal greatness, which reproduced, in many miniature types, the polity of imperial Rome; but the evil under which this greatness collapsed, was the difficulty, *par excellence*, of all modern governments,—the financial difficulty. Each municipality was made responsible in the person of its curials, or chief officers, not only for its own amount of taxation, but for that of the neighbouring district. The rescripts of the emperor, therefore, placed these unfortunate dignitaries in the unenviable position which the "publican" and the tax-gatherer have ever occupied in all ages and among all nations of the world. Compelled to endure the discontent and displeasure of the government whom it was their duty to pay, and of the people whom it was their duty to tax, they soon found the office too invidious for endurance. It passed from the hands of honourable men into that of unscrupulous adventurers, who did not allow any sense of delicacy or honesty to tie their hands in the hard battle which they had daily to maintain with the recalcitration of the proprietor and the extortion of the treasury. Cajolery and evasion were employed to encounter arbitrary exaction and violence. The land-tax alone amounted to the unprecedented sum of thirty-five per cent. upon all the

* Guizot, Lect. ii.

agricultural produce of the country. And besides the immense revenue which, from this and other sources, flowed into the "fiscus," or imperial exchequer, the emperor, by confiscation and his right of succession to lapsed inheritances, became by far the largest landed proprietor in the nation. Property of this sort, like property in Woods and Forests nearer home, is not always the best administered, or the most profitable in the world. Abuses, easy to conjecture and unnecessary to specify, so depreciated its value in the market, that two years' undisturbed tenure and cultivation were sufficient to confer upon any occupant a legal title to possession. Many portions of such lands were held upon a military tenure, by veterans discharged from regular service; and these tenures were at once a reminiscence of the Sullan and Cæsarean partitions of land among the discharged legionaries, and in some sort a singular anticipation of the feudal system. Sir J. Stephen has pointed out, that herein we may discover the origin of one among the most directly oppressive of all the fiscal burdens which weighed upon the people. For, "to promote the culture of these unprofitable imperial domains, were invented Corvées, that is, the obligation of personal services in conveying the produce of such lands to the public magazines, and in repairing the roads along which it was to be drawn."* When we add, that the rapacity of the Roman treasury, in addition to these heavy exactions, imposed a poll-tax upon every male from the age of fourteen, and upon every female from the age of twelve, payable up to their sixty-fifth year, we may form some idea of the gigantic burden under which those who enjoyed the blessings of Cæsarean government were compelled to groan. And like all other over-oppressive taxes, these had a natural tendency to multiply and augment themselves. The proprietors whom they ruined were gradually withdrawn from the number of solvent contributors; but as the amount

* Sir J. Stephen's Lecture, Hist. France, i,

demanded suffered no diminution, the burthen was immensely aggravated upon the shoulders of those who remained to pay. "A good year," the country people used to say, declares Sidonius Apollinaris, "does not depend upon the state of the harvests, but upon the disposition of the magistrates sent to govern us."* A sketch by the same hand, of a Roman officer, one Seronatus, is, unfortunately, too long for transcription, but it sets forth with the graphic force of actual experimental knowledge, the monstrous avarice and capricious tyranny of these heartless officials.† When they had stripped the country of everything it contained, it became, of course, necessary to grant exemption in the future. The great natural law of *ex nihilo nihil fit*, 'nothing is produced from nothing,' was invincible even by the cruel ingenuity of an imperial tax-gatherer. These exemptions, therefore, may give us some idea of the devastation which had been produced. In Italy, writes Gibbon,—and what was true of Italy must have been true to a still greater extent elsewhere,—"an exemption was granted in favour of three hundred and thirty thousand English acres of desert and uncultivated land, which amounted to one eighth of the whole surface of the province."‡ And this was before the footstep of a barbarian invader had been planted on her soil! No wonder, then, that these exactions, wrung from the lips of the sufferers the language of despair. One such bitter cry from a contemporary may teach us more than volumes of modern criticism. "So numerous were the receivers in comparison with the payers, and so enormous the weight of taxation, that the labourer broke down, the plains became deserts, and woods grew where the plough had been. . . It were impossible to number the officials who were rained upon every province and town,—*Magistri, Rationales*, clerks to the prefecture. Condemnations, proscriptions, and exactions

* Sidonius Apoll. Epist. iii. 6. † *Ibid.* Epist. ii. 1.
‡ Gibbon, Decline and Fall, ch. xvii

were all they knew; exactions, not frequent but perpetual, and accompanied by intolerable outrages. . . But the public distress, the universal mourning, was when the scourge of the census came, and its takers, scattering themselves in every direction, produced a general confusion, that I can only liken to the misery of a hostile invasion, or of a town abandoned to the soldiery. The fields were measured to the very clods; the trees counted; each vine-plant numbered. Cattle were registered as well as men. The crack of the lash and the cry of the tortured filled the air. The faithful slave was tortured for evidence against his master, the wife to depose against her husband, the son against his sire. For lack of evidence, the torture was applied to extort one's own witness against oneself, and when nature gave way, they wrote down what one had never uttered. Neither old age nor sickness was exempted; the sick and the infirm were alike summoned."* It was upon the unhappy curials, as we have just said—and every man whose estate exceeded twenty-five arpents belonged to the Curia—and upon the owners of the scanty property which remained, that the duty devolved of enforcing these devouring imposts. But who, except one of those unprincipled speculators in human misery, of whom we have already spoken, would willingly be a curial? No man of honour would accept the degradation of discharging such a duty; no man who yet retained his little patrimony, would willingly hazard it all in an office which rendered him personally responsible for the debts of every defaulter in his district. But the imperial policy provided against this difficulty. The curials were declared the serfs of the commonwealth, and, like serfs, they were bound, body and soul, to their unwelcome position. They might not quit the country. No excuse was accepted for non-attendance. They were not permitted to become soldiers under any circumstances, or to enter holy orders,

* The Letter of Lactantius; Michelet, p. 24.

except upon condition of making over all their property to some other person who would become curial in their stead. Death was not a deliverance, for the office was made hereditary. They were even compelled to marry, in order that there might not be wanting heirs who should succeed to their functions. Sometimes the Curia was barricaded to prevent their escape. For a tyranny such as this, even the magnificent title of "most noble and very illustrious order of curials" was a poor compensation. The "very illustrious order," despite of all precautions, died out, and the unhappy victims of their compulsory exactions were reduced to repudiate a citizenship which entailed upon them more miseries than the invaders' sword. Barbarism was preferable to a civilization which plundered and ruined them, and they accepted Barbarism as the more tolerable alternative. The picture drawn by a contemporary reveals the whole mystery of the situation, and explains a revolution which might seem unintelligible to those who believe in the necessary and universal triumph of intellectual over material force, and of the man of civilization over the man of savage life.

One other cause of this degeneracy must not be forgotten,—the effect of Roman rule upon national spirit. Everywhere it was the policy of Rome to create among her subjects an abject dependence upon herself: if they required protection from a foreign enemy, it was to the Roman legionary that they were compelled to have recourse; if great works were undertaken, they were finished upon a Roman model, and dedicated to uses learnt from Rome; if an ambitious desire for military, civil, or intellectual distinction ever arose among more intelligent minds, it was necessarily directed into a Roman channel. Hence, when the support of Rome was withdrawn, everything collapsed: the people had been in leading-strings, and were unable to stand alone. "The groans of the thrice-wretched Britons,"

reported by the venerable Bede, when, in their abandonment, they complained to the prætor Aëtius, "the Picts drive us into the ocean, and the ocean drives us back upon the Picts," express the state of all nationalities which had long reposed beneath the shadow of Roman supremacy; most especially does it describe the state of Gaul.*

If, then, these two societies had been simply brought face to face together,—Barbarism, with all its rude, irrational impulses and animal passions, on the one side, and Roman Civilization, with its fiscal tyranny, its hopeless mass of proletarian wretchedness, its slavery, and its utter want of patriotic sentiment, on the other, can we doubt what would have been the result? The German invasion would have resembled the devastating inroads of the great Asiatic conquerors, Attila, Tamerlane, or Tchengis Khan: Europe would have lost the accumulated experiences of a thousand years of polished life, and relapsed into a social state, from which the Pelasgic ancestors of Greece and Rome had emerged before the era of authentic history. But in respect of re-creative energy, there was a boundless difference between Asia and Europe—between a heathen and a Christian form of social life. A power had been born into the world more mighty for the restoration of society than the power of conquerors, governments, or philosophies. It fell to the lot of the Church to proclaim, in more than one sense, the new birth of Humanity. The regeneration of the individual was a type and an earnest of the regeneration of the race. Humanity might now renew her youth like the eagle; for now, at last, new blood had been infused into her corrupting and wasted veins. When, amid frightful convulsions, "distress of nations and perplexity, blood and fire, and vapour of smoke," the old-world institutions passed away, the Church stood by the cradle, and watched over the childhood of the new nationalities which were struggling

* Michelet, p. 27.

into existence, softening down their savage impulses, moulding their character, and shaping their destiny into the glorious form of a Federation, inspired by her own spirit;—the great, but, alas! too imperfectly realized image of a common Christendom.

Between the middle of the third and the fourth centuries, the Church had firmly established herself in Gaul. She had her centres of spiritual action, her edifices, her bishops, her officers, her writers, her martyrs. In another fifty years she possessed the land. The old national Druidism and the old Celtic language were driven back into their last fastnesses among the rocks and waves of the rugged Armorican peninsula; their only monument is to be found in the cromlechs of Morbihan, and in the wild traditions of the Breton peasantry.

In a future lecture we shall point out how it was that the Church stood when the Empire fell, and we shall also endeavour to describe, in general terms, the position which she occupied in that great and cardinal crisis when the old institutions had collapsed, and those which were to supply their place had not as yet been developed. Nowhere was this revolution more critical than in Gaul; nowhere is its character more intelligible. In Gaul, the Barbarian found a much more favourable field for his ambition than elsewhere. She possessed no mountain-rampart, behind which she might take refuge, as the Byzantine behind the Balkan, or the Italian behind the Alps. The Rhine, if we credit Cæsar, from the earliest times, had offered no serious obstacle to the inroads of either Celt or Teuton, as either Celt or Teuton felt himself in condition to overpower his rival of the opposite bank. Neither was Gaul the seat of the central power: she was an outlying province, the defences of which were often abandoned when peril menaced the capital. No such prestige attached to Lyons, Marseilles, Narbonne, or Toulouse, as disposed its shadowy terrors

round the mighty name of Rome, and paralyzed the untaught instincts of the barbarian in the presence of the Mistress of the World. But, on the other hand, the country westward of the Rhine contained, in abundance, all things likely to tempt his cupidity and ambition. Broad lands, that bore corn and wine; magnificent rivers, rolling onward to the three seas—the Rhone, the Garonne, the Loire, and the Seine; cities adorned with the wealth of Roman and Greek civilization; the costliest treasures of commerce and of art; splendid edifices, enriched with many-coloured marbles; fabrics of the finest texture and Eastern dyes; paintings, and jewels, and gold.* No wonder, then, that the roving bands of the Burgundians and Franks, and the more systematic invasion of the Visigoths, soon effected permanent settlements in Gaul. They found the Church alive, stirring and upright among the *débris* of the Empire. The Empire itself, as a political power, like one of those feeble organizations which form a link between animal and vegetable life, had shrunk back beyond the Alps, at the rude touch of the barbarian hand. The imperial authority was gone with the legions and the eagles; the municipal system was a miserable wreck; the old national ties of race and clientship had long since melted away in the dissolute atmosphere of Romano-Celtic life; the feudal system was as

* The description given by Sidonius Apollinaris of Narbonne, after its occupation by the Visigoths, though drawn with his accustomed exaggeration, may serve to show how much of Rome,—of Roman institutions, customs, and habits, even down to the details of domestic life,—was to be found among what were called the new barbarian kingdoms of the era:—

"Salve, Narbo potens salubritate,
Urbe et rure simul bonus videri,
Muris, civibus, ambitu, tabernis,
Portis, porticibus, foro, theatro,
Delubris, Capitoliis, monetis,
Thermis, arcubus, horreis, macellis,
Pratis, fontibus, insulis, salinis,
Stagnis, flumine, merce, ponte, ponto."

SIDON. APOLL., *Carmin.* xxiii. 36—43.

yet undeveloped; monarchy was no more than a rude chieftainship, incapable of assuming the place of a settled government; and the Church was the only existing power competent to embody the ideas of law and order before the eyes of multitudes of invaders, consisting of individuals of every race in every stage of civilization. Her position and function, therefore, are rightly described by Guizot, when he says: "The Christian Church, in the fifth century, presents itself as an independent and constituted society, interposed between the masters of the world, the sovereign, the possessors of temporal power, on the one hand, and the people on the other, serving as a bond between them, and influencing all." But of this hereafter.

It is time to explain briefly what were the elements of this barbarian society with which the Church was thus brought into contact, and the sources from which it was derived. In the year 406, the formidable gathering, mainly of Teutonic tribes, took place, occasioned by the ambitious design of obtaining indemnity in the spoil of the Empire, for the loss of those lands in Eastern Europe from which the rolling waves of the great Asiatic inundation had swept them away. We have seen, in a former lecture, that the left wing of this mighty host, under Radagasius, if, as is little probable, it may be described as a single army, were annihilated in Italy by the sword of Stilicho and the pestilential vapours with which the polluted waters of the Arno bathed their camp. The fortunes of the right wing, consisting principally of Vandals, Suevi, Alani, and Burgundians, who turned to the Rhine rather than to the Alps, were more successful: they effected a lodgment upon the left bank of the river, from which they never again turned their faces to the East; and thus, as Gibbon has seen, were the first to inaugurate the new system of things which substituted itself for the Empire, and established the predominance of the

A.D. 406.

A.D. 406.

German over the Latin element in all the existing kingdoms of Europe. "This memorable passage," he says, "of the Suevi, the Vandals, the Alani, and the Burgundians, who never afterwards retreated, may be considered as the fall of the Roman empire in the countries beyond the Alps; and the barriers which had so long separated the savage and the civilized nations of the earth were, from that fatal moment, levelled with the ground."* The first of these tribes appear to have possessed the most adventurous spirit: by this, or some other cause, they were thrust onward through the narrow passes of the Pyrenees into the Iberian peninsula, to which their story belongs: it will be found in the lecture devoted to its history. But the Burgundians remained nearly in that district which ever since has borne their name. We first hear of them as a tribe of Teutonic stock, located between the Oder and the Vistula, on either bank of the river Warta. When the Gepidæ descended southward with the Goths, the Burgundians were compelled to recoil before the advance of the former tribe: one portion of them took refuge in Bornholm, an island of the Baltic; the remainder turned westward, and made an attempt to enter Gaul. They were repulsed by Probus, but permitted to settle near the sources of the Main. Jovian showed them favour, and gave them lands in the Germania Secunda. This was in the latter part of the fourth century. Just at its close, they adopted Christianity, but under an Arian form. Ammianus tells us that they were a most warlike race; that their youth were so numerous as to cause alarm among all the surrounding nations.† The most singular feature of their political constitution was the separation of the supreme civil and ecclesiastical authorities, something after the manner of the Japanese. They had a king, or Heudinos, as he was called, and a chief priest, or Sinistus. The office of the

* Gibbon, vol. v. p. 224. † Amm. Mar. xxviii. 5.

former can scarcely have been an enviable one, if, as Gibbon says, he was made responsible for failures in war and irregularities in the seasons; being deposed when, from either cause, injury had been inflicted on the Burgundian common-weal. Their barbarian wars with the Alemanni, about some salt-pits, or salt-producing stream, have been recorded by Ammianus, but would scarcely deserve mention, were it not for a curious story which connects the Burgundians, beyond any of their brethren, with Rome. They claimed, it seems, to be descended from the soldiers of Drusus, who had garrisoned the German fortresses.* This can, of course, only have been true in the most limited degree; probably it was not true at all. It may, however, point to some ancient connection, not without its fruits; and may also explain the language and feeling of the Italian party, when, as we have seen, they summoned the Burgundians to their aid against the Ostrogoths, and addressed them, though with very small effect, as old allies and kinsmen.† Be this as it may, Valentinian summoned an immense number of them to the Rhine,—eighty thousand, say some accounts; and, subsequently repenting of his bargain, or being unable to fulfil it, was only enabled to get rid of his mercenaries after much hard fighting against them. Indeed, he entirely owed his success to the extreme strength of the Gallic fortresses, and the inexperience of the barbarians in siege operations. In the year 413 A.D., a large portion of the nation established themselves, by consent of the emperor, on the west bank of the Rhine; and we found them there at the advent of Attila. They aided, it may be remembered, their brethren of the east bank against his terrible onslaught, and subsequently bestowed upon them the gift of orthodoxy, which they had themselves some time previously acquired in the more

A.D. 413.

* Orosius, lib. vii. c. 32. † Lecture VI. p. 293.

Catholic atmosphere of the Gaulish province. These events increased their political greatness and military power; for we next find them united with the Visigoths, and other semi-Romanized barbarians, under the banner of Attila, in the great world-combat of Châlons.

In the mean time, the Visigoths had established, close beside them, a second powerful kingdom of German origin, and, with the Visigoths, they united in a determined and successful attempt to drive their former comrades, the Sueves, beyond the limits of Gaul. But Visigoths and Burgundians were both, in common with all the rising barbarian nationalities, overshadowed, from Italy, by the power of the great Theodoric; and, in all probability, were for a time politically dependent upon the Ostrogoth crown. The relations between them were, certainly, if we may judge from the diplomatic language already quoted,* not those of equal and rival potentates. With the fall of Theodoric, this state of semi-submission passed away: but a new power had appeared upon the scene, destined to play the chief part in the drama of Gaulish history, and to absorb both Burgundian and Visigoth into itself. The Franks were becoming masters of the North. It is perhaps not correct to speak of them as a new power, because, as we shall presently show, their presence, in all probability, preceded that of the Burgundians on the western side of the Rhine; but it was not until the great victory of Tolbiac, wherein Clovis, by repelling a most formidable band of German invaders, consolidated the strength of his nation, that we can consider the Franks as constituting a power similar in character, and rivalling in strength, the already settled dominations of Visigoths and Burgundians south of the Loire. With the Franks, the earliest relations of the Burgundians were of a friendly character. Clovis had married Clotilda,

A.D. 456.

A.D. 524.

A.D. 496.

* Lecture VI. p. 300.

the daughter of the Burgundian king; but, for the interests of the dynasty, he had better have married any other woman in Europe; for the Burgundians were, as we have said, Arians, and Clotilda was a Catholic,—the only Catholic then living in all the German nationalities; the only woman capable of influencing the Frankish king against the religion and interests of her countrymen, and inducing him to direct the formidable power at his disposal upon the German kingdoms established in Southern Gaul. The Catholic, or Latin party, who, in Burgundy, as throughout Gaul, still continued to form a powerful faction, and to cling to the old Roman traditions, were naturally inspired, by the conversion of Clovis, with the highest hopes, and are even said to have directly invited him into the Burgundian territory. But henceforward, until the year 534, when this territory was seized and appropriated by the Franks, the main incidents in its history are inextricably mingled with that of the latter race, and will be more fitly recorded in connection with it. Before, however, dismissing the Burgundian from special consideration, it is right to say a word upon his character and habits, for they evinced a somewhat unusual aptitude for the arts of civilized and settled life. The very name of Burgundian is, by some authors, said to be a sort of nickname given to the tribe in scorn of their predilection for dwelling in fixed habitations,—a practice which seemed effeminate to the hardy warriors who boasted to Cæsar that a roof had not covered their head for years. The story which we have just mentioned, of their descent from the soldiers of Drusus, has, doubtless, some reference to this fact, and is at least an indication of their divergence from the wilder type of Teutonic life. It is at least certain that, when subjected to the influence of Roman ideas and manners, they speedily underwent a process of assimilation, and acquired, not commercial habits only, but considerable skill in the mechanical arts, as workers in wood and metal.

"Nearly all of them are carpenters," says a contemporary, "and support themselves by the practice of this art."* Before long, they acquired, by the peaceful and successful exercise of their trade, a sort of obese prosperity, in which their ungainly and somewhat oily persons offended the finer Romanized tastes of the Auvergnat Sidonius; nor, even to the present day, is the type of the race extinct in eastern France. "Whom ask you for a song?" says the worthy bishop, in words which we have prefixed as a motto to this lecture,—"Whom ask you for a song to serve as an epithalamium to your friend? Of me! whose lot is cast among the long-haired bands, and who have to endure the sound of the German dialect, and to praise, every now and then, with woful countenance, the strains which the gorged Burgundian bellows forth while he besmears his locks with rancid butter."† There is, however, more pleasing testimony in their favour than this. "The good-nature, which is one of the present characteristics of the Germanic race, was early displayed by the Burgundians. Before their entrance into the Empire, they very generally pursued some trade, and were carpenters or cabinet-makers; they supported themselves by their labour in the intervals of peace, and were thus free from that twofold pride of the warrior and of the idle proprietor, which nourished the insolence of the other barbarian conquerors."‡ . . "Established as masters in the domains of the Gallic landowners, and having received, or taken, under the colour of hospitality, two-thirds of the land, and a third of the slaves, or, probably, what amounted to a half of the entire property, they scrupled about usurping anything more, and did not treat the Roman as their farmer, or, to use the German phrase, as their *lide*, but as their equal; and even experienced, when in company with the rich senators, their co-proprietors, something of the con-

* Socrates, lib. vii. c. 30, apud Scrip. Fr. i. 604.

† Sid. Apoll. *loco citato.* ‡ Socrates, lib. vii. c. 30.

scious embarrassment of men of inferior birth who have suddenly risen up in the world. When quartered as soldiers in a handsome mansion, and, in point of fact, masters of it, they did what they saw done by the Roman clients of their noble host, and assembled in the morning at his levee."*

The Visigoth kingdom, which, so far as its Gallic dominions were concerned, ultimately shared the same fate as that of Burgundy, was, for the time of its existence, much more notable for its power, wealth, civilization, and renown. Its origin will also lead us back to another lecture. The general history of the Goths in their two great subdivisions, until Alaric led his countrymen to the very southernmost shore of Italy, has been already detailed.† But when Alaric slept beneath the waters of the Busentinus, his disheartened warriors turned their steps once more towards the Alps. Their voluptuous life in Italian villas was fast dissolving the moral and physical vigour of these fair-haired giants of the North. Ataulphus, brother of Alaric, believing that nothing save the "certaminis gaudia," "the rapturous emotions of battle," could revive the energies of his race, saw the necessity for new fields of strife and victory. He adopted the expedient of seeking them in the service of the emperor Honorius, whose sister, the Princess Placidia, he had espoused. Many writers ascribe the somewhat singular course which he adopted, to the influence of his wife; but the reason already alleged appears more probable; for in no other capacity could he anticipate such opportunities for war, and such prizes for victory, as in that of an imperial lieutenant. Indeed, it is probable that his union with the emperor's sister did not take place until the Goth had already appeared as a conqueror in Gaul. Be this as it may, he declared himself the faithful servant of Honorius, and vowed, in that capacity, to sweep all his

A.D. 412.

* Aug. Thierry, Lettres sur l'Hist. de France, vii.

† See Lecture IV. p. 179.

brother-in-law's enemies beyond the Alps into the sea. He was as good as his word; for he was speedily across the Rhine, across the Garonne, and over the Pyrenees. He took possession of Toulouse, Narbonne, and Bordeaux, in the name of the Roman emperor. But he soon rendered him a more valuable service. Jovinus and Sebastian had collected the revolted legions of Germany, and were about to descend the Alps upon Ravenna, for the purpose of wresting the sceptre from the feeble grasp of Honorius. It is said that Ataulphus had once looked with favourable eyes upon the conspirators and their design. But they aroused his wrath by the reception of his hereditary enemy Sarus within their camp. He appeared before them with his unconquered Gothic giants, and the heads of the two usurpers, which he dispatched to Ravenna, afforded a satisfactory proof of the prowess of his arms and the zeal of his fidelity. Retracing his steps to Gaul, he followed the Suevi and Vandals across the Pyrenees, and taught them to respect the sword of Rome, at least when wielded by the hand of a Visigoth lieutenant. He fixed on Barcelona as the seat of a residence, royal, or perhaps viceregal, as the case might hereafter require. But here he perished by assassination, and the highborn Placidia, daughter and sister of Roman emperors, was subjected to the basest indignities by the murderers of her husband. They were soon hurled from the throne which they had stained with the blood of a brave warrior and great man.

A.D. 414.

We find Wallia in their place, an able and politic prince, who, according to the accounts of those who had an interest in exaggerating Gothic prowess, entirely overran Spain and humbled the rival tribe of Vandals. But on these victories, when treating of Vandal history, we have had occasion to speak in terms of distrust.* It is possible that he had turned his thoughts to the conquest of Africa, when he was recalled

* Lecture VII.

beyond the Pyrenees by most earnest solicitations from Honorius, who was once more menaced by another claimant for the throne. But it is possible also, that the want of the means of transport, the failure of provisions, and the chances of an attack upon his rear, may have had more effect in withdrawing him from this new field of enterprise than the piteous cry which proceeded from Ravenna. He however concluded a treaty with Honorius, by the terms of which the latter recovered his kinswoman Placidia, the heroine of so many adventures, and secured the services of the Gothic sword; while the Goths, on their part, were to receive 600,000 measures of wheat, and a full supply for the future, of pay, clothing, and the munitions of war. They are said by the historians to have fully discharged their part of the compact. The enemies of the emperor, the Alans, the Suevi, and the Vandals, were driven to their distant mountain fastnesses. Spain once more acknowledged, in terms at least, allegiance to Italy, and Wallia, the Goth, re-entered Rome, traversed the Sacred Way, and climbed the Capitol in triumphal pomp, eight or nine years after the soldiers of Alaric had passed along the same route in the pride and cruelty of barbarian conquest.

Wallia, however, received a more tangible reward than the barren mockery of a ceremonial which dishonoured while it palely reflected the glories of Cæsar and Aurelian. He was permitted to select lands for his veterans in Gaul, after the example of Sylla and Augustus, and in conformity with a policy which we have seen more than once adopted by the emperors of the East. His choice was soon made. The fertile region which stretches beneath a genial sun from the Garonne to the Loire, with the two seas for its boundaries, seemed to these children of a severer clime a promised land, flowing with milk and honey, an inheritance of fields and vineyards, and all the delights of southern life. Nor were

A.D. 419.

the sons of Anak and the fenced cities there, to defend the lordship of the soil. The peaceful occupant, professedly holding under the imperial government, saw with dismay the arrival of the formidable strangers. Describing themselves as the guests and very good friends of the Roman emperor, they claimed, according to the terms of their grant, two-thirds of the peasant's patrimony, seized his fields, and pillaged his farm or house, until, by that summary process of ejectment which the sword supplies, they had made themselves sovereign masters of the whole territory.

This was the origin, or rather the establishment, of the Visigoth kingdom of Gaul, a kingdom which possessed many of the elements of greatness, and, had not circumstances hindered its development, might have rivalled in power and glory the kindred kingdom of the Ostrogoths beyond the Alps. If it were ever in leading-strings to the imperial authority of Theodoric at Ravenna, it soon cast them off, and evinced a scant measure of gratitude to its, perhaps involuntary, benefactor. Theodoric, son of Alaric the Terrible, now occupied the throne. With all his father's ambition, he struggled vigorously to enlarge his dominions at the expense of the Empire. But the renowned Aëtius kept him in check until the approach of Attila, with the hordes of Asia at his back, convinced these two far-seeing statesmen that if Civilization was to be saved, the two great powers that maintained its existence in the West must be at peace. The scarcely extinguished remembrance of the late quarrel, perhaps the bitterness of disappointed ambition and a secret jealousy of his rival, made Theodoric hesitate until the Huns had crossed the Rhine. We have already recounted the causes which removed this hesitation, and brought him to play his proper part on the plains of Châlons. After his glorious fall in that memorable field, the Visigoth king, another Theodoric, superseded his brother, by an intrigue to which we have

already referred,—he is said by some writers to have procured his assassination,—and at once became arbiter of the destiny of the Roman empire. By his powerful hand, Avitus of Auvergne, who had induced his father to join the cause of Rome against the Huns, was clothed with the imperial purple, and supported on a throne which he feebly filled until his overthrow by Ricimer.

There is a sketch of this monarch's personal appearance and manner of life,—a monarch described by Sidonius as

> "Martius ille rector atque
> Magno patre prior, decus Getarum,
> Romano columen, salusque gentis,"*

in the letters of the same writer, which graphically places before us the men who built up the new civilization. I shall make no apology for quoting a contemporary account, long as it may be, since it is assuredly far more valuable to the real student of history than any modern attempt of the same kind. "He is a prince well worthy of being known even by those not admitted to his intimate acquaintance, to such a degree have Nature and God, the sovereign Arbiter of all things, accumulated in his person gifts of varied excellence. His character is such, that even envy itself, that universal accompaniment of royalty, could not defraud him of his due praise. As for his personal appearance, he is well made, and neither tall nor short: his head is round in shape, and the thick hair, falling back a little from the forehead, curls upwards towards the crown: his neck shows no large development of muscle: his eyebrows are thick, and regularly arched: his eyelashes, when he closes his eyes, reach the middle of his cheeks: his ears, in accordance with the national custom, are covered with long depending locks of twisted hair: his nose is slightly aquiline: his lips are thin, and compressed at the corners of

* Sidon. Apollinaris, Carmin. xxiii. 68—71.

his mouth: when he shows accidentally the regular row of his teeth, they are seen to be as white as snow: the hair is daily removed from his nostrils: his beard grows up to the hollow of his temples, but it is daily plucked out by a barber, at least so far as the lower part of the jaw: his chin, throat, and neck, are not obese, but full in form: his skin is white as milk, and, when gazed upon more closely, becomes suffused with a youthful blush; for his frequent high colour is produced, not by anger, but by modesty: his shoulders are well-shaped, his arms strong and sinewy, his hands large: his spine, sunk somewhat deeply between the ribs, is set straight in his back: his sides are large, from their distended muscles, his waist small, his loins vigorous, his thigh hard as horn, the joints of his knees most strongly knit, his knees themselves unwrinkled and well-made. a stout calf supports his leg, and, for such large limbs, his foot is small. You ask me to describe his daily out-door life. Accompanied by a very small suite, he attends, before daylight, the services of the Church in his own household: he is very sedulous in his devotions; but although his tones are suppressed, you may perceive that this is a matter of habit with him, rather than of religious principle. The business of administration occupies the rest of the morning. An armed *aide-de-camp* stands beside his throne: his band of fur-clad body-guards is admitted into the palace, in order that they may be close to the royal presence; while, in order that they may not make too much noise, they are kept out of the room; and so they converse in murmurs, inside a railing and outside of the hangings. Ambassadors from foreign powers are then introduced. The king listens much, and says little. If an affair require discussion, he puts it off; if immediate action, he presses it forward. At eight o'clock, he rises, and proceeds to examine either his treasures or his stables. When he goes to hunt, he does not deem it suitable to the royal dignity to carry his bow upon his own person:

when, however, accident or any of his suite points out to him a wild animal or a bird, he puts out his hand behind him, and receives it, unstrung, from a page; for, just as he regards it an undignified thing to carry the weapon in its case, so does he deem it unmanly that it should be prepared by another for his use. Sometimes he strings it by pressing the two extremities together in his hands; sometimes he places one end against his heel, and runs his hand, with the knot in it, along the bow to its other end: he selects an arrow, fits it to the string, and lets fly, first asking what you wish him to strike. You make your choice, and he invariably hits the mark; indeed, if there is ever any mistake, it is oftener in the sight of him who points out the object, than in the aim of him who shoots at it. His banquets do not differ from those of a private gentleman. You never see the vulgarity of an immense mass of tarnished plate, heaped upon a groaning table by a puffing and perspiring slave. The only thing there weighty is the discourse; for either serious subjects are discussed, or none at all. Sometimes purple, and sometimes fine silk, are employed in adorning the furniture of the dining-room. The dinner is recommended by the skill of the cookery, not by the price paid for the provisions; the plate by its brightness, not by its massive weight. The guests are much more frequently called upon to complain of thirst, from finding the goblet or glass too seldom proffered, than to shun ebriety by refusing it. In a word, one sees there the elegance of Greece, the dispatch of Italy, the splendour of a public, with the attention of a private entertainment, the regular order of a royal household. After dinner, Theodoric either takes no siesta at all, or a very short one. When he feels inclined for play, he picks up the dice quickly, looks at them carefully, shakes them scientifically, throws at once, jocularly addresses them, and awaits the result with patience. When the cast is a good one, he says nothing; when bad, he

laughs; good or bad, he is never angry, and takes both philosophically. As for 'the revenge,' he equally disdains either to ask for or avoid it: even in play, you would fancy him in the field of battle; for he cares for nothing except victory. While engaged in this way, he lays aside for a little the strictness of royal etiquette; he exhorts his friends to play, to freedom of language and demeanour. I will tell you what I really think—he is afraid that people should be afraid of him. In a word, he is delighted when the adversary whom he has beaten loses his temper; for this loss of temper convinces him that he has not been merely allowed to win; and, what you will be surprised to hear, this good-humour, sometimes produced by the most trifling incidents, is the cause of bringing to a successful issue affairs of the gravest importance. Then, petitions, which have hitherto suffered shipwreck under the most distinguished patronage, suddenly attain the haven of success; indeed, when I have myself a favour to ask, I am delighted to be beaten; for the loss of my game brings the gain of my suit. About three o'clock, again commence the fatigues of government: back come the suitors, and back those whose duty it is to keep them at a distance. On all sides is heard a wrangling and intriguing crowd, which, prolonged to the royal dinner-hour, then only begins to diminish: after that, it disperses, as each individual seeks his own special patron. Occasionally, though not often, jesters are admitted to the royal banquet, without, however, being permitted to vent their malicious raillery upon any person present. One never hears, however, the water-organ there, nor a studied concert of vocal performers, under the direction of a regular conductor: no one plays the lyre or the flute: there is no choir-master, no singing-girls, or girls who dance with a tambourine: the king only takes pleasure in that sort of music which has as good an effect upon the mind as its strains have upon the ear. When he has risen from table, the guard of the

treasury commences its nightly functions: armed men take their station at all approaches to the palace, whose duty it will be to keep watch there during the first hours of the night."*

The words with which Sidonius himself follows up this extract, will perhaps be applied to it here: "Sed jam quid istud meas ad partes?"—What has all this to do with our present purpose? I can only reply, that if it be the historian's duty to aim at setting forth "the very age and body of the time," that end may perhaps be better attained by this minute contemporary portraiture of a fifth-century court and king, than by more solemn and pretentious disquisition. From this delineation of Visigoth life, one thing, at any rate, is clear: we cannot confound the nation with the Franks, and other wilder specimens of the Teutonic races, under the common and sweeping epithet of "Barbarians." They welcomed the arts and appliances of a superior civilization, and showed, both in Italy and Gaul, that they only required longer time, and larger opportunities, to rival the refinement of the old Roman life, without reproducing its corruptions. They came, in their long passage through the Empire, to respect the prodigious power, and to admire the splendour and elegance which civilization had bestowed on Rome; and, therefore, they accepted her arts and institutions in a docile spirit, which rendered them more polished, gentle, and intelligent than others of their barbarian brethren, whose contact with the old society had been more violent and less continuous. They, in fact, became so far Romanized in feeling, that they felt, or at least the wiser and more thoughtful among their rulers felt, that the true part which the Goth had to play in history, was to revive the Empire under another name. This is very clearly seen in a most remarkable passage, quoted both by Michelet and Thierry, from a fifth-century writer. "I

* Sid. Apoll. lib. i. Ep. 2.

remember," says he, "having heard the blessed Jerome relate, at Bethlehem, his having heard from a citizen of Narbonne, who had risen to high offices under the emperor Theodosius, and was, moreover, a religious, wise, and grave man, and who had enjoyed, in his native city, the friendship of Ataulph, that the king of the Goths, who was a high-hearted and large-minded man, was in the habit of saying, that his warmest ambition at first had been to annihilate the name of Rome, and to erect out of its ruins a new empire, to be called the Gothic; so that, to employ the terms commonly used, all that had been Romania should become Gothia, and he himself play the same part that Cæsar Augustus formerly did: but that, becoming convinced by experience that the Goths were incapable, from their stubborn barbarism, of obedience to the laws, without which a republic ceases to be a republic, he had resolved to seek glory by devoting the might of the Goths to the integral re-establishment, and even increase, of the power of the Roman name, so that he might be regarded by posterity as the restorer of that empire which he found himself unable to transplant. In this view he abstained from war, and devoted his best care to the cultivation of peace."* The policy thus expressed was in no inconsiderable degree carried out. Though the Visigoths seized upon two-thirds of the land, yet the tyranny of the imperial tax-gatherer had already put nearly that proportion out of cultivation. The barbarian, in many cases, by his settlement in Gaul, only reclaimed a barren wilderness. This was no great hardship upon the original proprietors of the soil; and, in some cases, where hardship did exist, if we are to believe a story preserved by Paulinus, the sufferer received indemnification.†

* Michelet, Histoire de la France, book ii. ch. 1; Thierry, Lettres sur l'Histoire de France, vi.

† Paulinus in Eucharist. v. 564—581, ed. 1681; quoted by Michelet, Hist. de France, ch. ii.

Paulinus himself, a Gaulish poet, had lost all his property when Ataulphus invaded Gaul: he retired to Marseilles, and one fine morning was marvellously pleased to receive the value of his estate, which had been generously transmitted by the new occupant. Men of cultivation and intelligence found a warm welcome and honourable home in the Gothic courts of Pavia and Toulouse: the case was far different in the Frankish capitals. Who can imagine a Cassidorus, a Boëthius, or an Avitus, in the train of Clovis or Clotaire?

Between the check imposed by the power of Ricimer upon the kingdom of the Visigoths in Gaul, and their temporary absorption in the Italian empire of their Ostrogoth kinsman Theodoric the Great, the Visigoths, in conjunction with their Spanish brethren, consolidated their rule in the old Roman provinces north of the Pyrenees, winning Narbonne, with many other cities, and advancing their armies quite up to the banks of the Loire. They had, however, by this time, come, like the Burgundians, into contact with the rising power of the Franks, and two years after the battle of Tolbiac, had the folly, in their capacity as Arians, to offend the new-fledged zeal of Clovis by a persecution of the Catholics scattered throughout their dominions. The sufferers called for aid upon the new champion of the faith, and the politic or zealous king responded to a call which offered such brilliant opportunities for the propagation of orthodoxy and the extension of the Frankish power. The Arians of Burgundy, it might have been supposed, would have united with their Visigoth co-religionists against the progress of a rival power and adverse creed. But the resistance of Burgundy had been already subdued. Burgundian soldiers swelled the ranks of the Frank army that, in the bloody battle of Vouglé, near Poitiers, vanquished the Visigoths, and left Alaric, their king, dead upon the field;

A.D. 462.

A.D. 507.

a fitting punishment for the temerity with which he had refused to await the succours already dispatched by the Ostrogoths of Italy to his assistance.

The way was thus opened for an ambitious and unrelenting enemy to the very gates of their capital, and the Visigoths lost Toulouse. They substituted for it Narbonne, but were only saved from destruction by the growing power of Theodoric the Great. Theodoric assumed sovereign rights over his Gallic kinsmen, and with these rights the duty to protect them against both Franks and Burgundians, whom he signally defeated in a vigorously-contested battle at Arles.

A.D. 508.

A.D. 510.

But Aquitaine had been already lost, and the Visigoth possessions in Gaul, restricted to the province of Septimania, between the Rhone and the Pyrenees, were henceforward little more than an appanage to the more firmly-established monarchy in Spain. In 526, Theodoric died, and the two kindred tribes of Ostrogoths and Visigoths again assumed independent positions,* making the Rhone the boundary between them; but the transfer of the Gothic capital beyond the Pyrenees, by Theudis, in 533, and the consequent devastations of their Gallic territory by the Franks, may be regarded as the closing scene of the Visigoth annals in France. Henceforward their history belongs to that of Spain, in connection with which we shall hereafter briefly recur to it.

A.D. 526.

The treatise of Tacitus is our great source of information for all that relates to the primitive state of Germany; and we have largely availed ourselves of it in a former lecture, when attempting to sketch briefly the main ethnological features of the great Teutonic races. Among these, the Franks may be considered to exhibit the most complete and conspicuous type of the national character; yet, in the "Germany" of Tacitus the name of Frank does not occur.

* Greg. Tours, ii. § 31.

This is easily explained by the hypothesis that the name does not denote a people but a federation, and we know as a fact that other similar federations—that of the Alemanni for instance, and that of the Saxons—were of common occurrence to the east of the great Gallo-German river.

There are not wanting external confirmations of a theory so probable in itself; and accordingly, all later historians seem to agree in the belief that the name of Frank was first given to a confederacy of Teutonic tribes who were located somewhere on the lower Rhine. The title "Frak," "Frech,' and with a nasal intonation "Frank," a freeman, is one of self-laudation, and in this respect it resembles that of the Alemannic league, who styled themselves Alle Manni (all-men); and perhaps, if the etymology of Thierry be correct, that also of the Saxe-sons, or "Sons of the short-sword." Certain French writers, offended at the admixture of so large a Teutonic element in their nationality, have devised the existence of a Celtic tribe of "Franks," who, at some pre-historic period, passed beyond the Rhine, and returned in later ages to claim their patrimonial lands in Gallic soil. Cæsar certainly does speak of several such migrations, and of the passage of roving Celtic bands to the East. The most remarkable of these we have noticed;* but there is nothing in the text of Cæsar, or of any other writer, which will warrant us in believing that a return in force and a settlement in Gaul took place. The Franks, says Procopius, "are the same as the Germans, and they used to live near the mouths of the Rhine;" and there is no reason why a man of his travelled experience should not have had a tolerably correct opinion on the matter. The hypothesis, then, is altogether untenable, and is in direct contradiction to the analogy of all other permanent migratory movements of the same period. Gallic migrations, of which we have spoken in another place, had a very different destiny, and

* Lecture III.

exhibit no indications of a return to the West. This theory, therefore, is given up even by Frenchmen, and may be dismissed from our consideration.

The learned ethnologist Dr. Latham has asserted his belief that the name of Frank belonged to all the German tribes that did not accept the supremacy of Rome. He does not state, nor have I been able to discover, the grounds of this opinion. But the Charta Peutingeria, an old Roman map, dating probably from before the third century, uses the term "Francia," or "land of the free tribes," to denote all the region which extends from the neighbourhood of Cologne to the German Ocean. In common Roman parlance, the national epithet may have been adopted in some such general and loose signification, or the Germans may have so employed it themselves; but this does not invalidate the theory of its application by the "desynonomizing process," to a special confederacy of the tribes described by Tacitus as dwelling beside the Rhine. Sir F. Palgrave expresses his opinion that they came from what are now called the provinces of Franconia, Westphalia, and Thuringia; "though some," he adds, "place their original seat only on the Rhine." It is, however, only in the latter locality that history records their existence.

Among the most important of these federate "Franks," were the Sigambri of Horace, Virgil, and Tacitus, now very generally admitted to have been identical with the Salian Franks.* We may also include the Bructeri, Chamavi, Marsi, and other members of the great Cheruscan league, whom Arminius led against the legions of Varus, when, in

* *Vide* the words of Gregory of Tours, prefixed as a motto to this lecture. I have seen a theory founded upon the use of the epithet "mitis" as applied to Sicamber, which infers the improved civilization of the tribe since the days when they were the "feroces Sicambri" of Horace! This, of course, arises from ignorance of the Latin language; *mitis* being taken adverbially, "*gently bow*," as "Serus in cœlum redeas" in the same author.

the depths of the Teutoburger Wald, he humbled the pride, and inflicted so rude a shock upon the power of Rome. It must have been at a very early period that the Frank, following the example of his fellow Teutons, first crossed the Rhine for predatory excursions, though not for permanent settlement. In the case of the Visigoths, we have attached some value to the description of the personal characteristics of their king by a contemporary observer. The personal characteristics of the Franks have been described by the same writer, and their wild bands must have often passed before his eyes. "From the summit of their head descends their auburn hair, drawn to each side of the forehead: their neck and shoulders thus are bare and bright. A sea-green light flashes from the watery paleness of their eyes. Their faces are shorn, and instead of a beard, exhibit scattered tufts of hair. Tight garments compress their limbs of giant mould, and the short skirt displays the knee. A broad baldric hangs round their waists, of narrow girth. It is their sport to hurl swiftly through the air the double-headed axe, knowing the spot where it will strike; to whirl their bucklers round, and leap beyond their own javelin-casts, and even before them, to strike the foe. Even in their childish years the love of battle is ripened in their breast. If hard pressed by numbers or disadvantageous position, they yield to death, but never unto fear: undaunted they maintain the fight, and, ere their courage, life itself departs."* Such a Frank hero was the gallant young Sigismer, whose description, also by Sidonius, we venture to add as a pendant to his portrait of Theodoric. "The young chief Sigismer," says Sidonius Apollinaris, "walked, preceded or followed by horses whose housings sparkled with jewels. On foot, and clad in milk-white silk, resplendent with gold and blazing with purple; these three colours harmonized with

* Sidonius Apollinaris, Panegyricus Majoriani, 237—252.

his hair, his complexion, and his skin. . . . The chiefs around him wore boots of fur; their legs and knees were bare; their high narrow gowns, striped with various colours, hardly reached their calves, and their sleeves did not fall below the elbow; their green mantles were edged with a scarlet border; their swords, suspended from the shoulder by a long belt, girded their sides, around which they wore skins: their arms were an additional ornament."* Such were the adventurous warriors who, during the first century, appeared within the limits of the Empire, sometimes as plunderers, sometimes as holders of territory obtained for services in the Roman army. They were alike the best soldiers in the emperor's pay, and his most formidable opponents in the field.

Just before the great movement of the Goths, they appear to have been unusually restless and aggressive; so much so, indeed, as to have menaced the Roman frontier. Aurelian, the conqueror of the East, won his earlier laurels in a terrible conflict with these barbarians near Ma-
A.D. 241. yence. But five-and-thirty years later, Probus, after twice defeating their predatory bands, found it more convenient—for many doubt whether it was more wise—to grant them lands in Gaul. They, however, did
A.D. 277. good service in the peasant insurrection of Bagaudæ, and these grants were repeated and enlarged by Constantius and his successors. The adventures
A.D. 291. of one body of these daring Germans are of almost romantic character. Planted by Probus upon the shores of the Euxine, they soon wearied of their exile, and formed, what was in that age, the marvellous resolution of returning by sea. Setting sail in a few rude barks, they plundered, as they advanced, the coasts of Asia, Greece, and Sicily; passed the Pillars of Hercules; and, after struggling successfully with the vast Atlantic waves which lash the western coast

* Sidonius Apollinaris.

of Europe, landed at last in safety at the mouth of their beloved Rhine.

Half a century elapses, and we find that the German Franks had become exceedingly troublesome to the Gallic provinces of the Empire, actuated, we may imagine, by accounts of the prosperity and comfort of their brethren on the opposite bank of the Rhine. They may boast of having matured the military education, and perhaps also the ambitious designs, of the famous Julian, who was sent direct from the schools of Athens to assume the command as "Cæsar," on the Rhenish military frontier. Those who are fond of the recital of good hard fighting may find their taste amply gratified in the pages of stout old Ammianus Marcellinus, where he records the campaigns of Julian, his comrade, and the idol of his military admiration.* Julian has the credit of subjugating the Salii, and driving the Chamavi beyond the Rhine; yet Julian, with his eyes ever fixed on the East, was not sorry to allow some of his sturdy opponents to settle in Brabant. Before the century closes, we have seen the Frank Arbogastes destroy Valentinian II. and become actual master of the imperial throne.† The Franks next appear as offering an ineffectual resistance in the Roman interest—and of course in their own as well—to the great tide of German invasion, of which we have so frequently spoken as destroying the Roman empire beyond the Alps, and establishing the Burgundians and Visigoths in Gaul. Disturbed in their own settlements, they crossed the Alps to indemnify themselves at the expense of their Roman friends in the fertile plains of Italy; but Stilicho received them with so rude a shock, that this first experiment of Frank trans-Alpine enterprise, the precursor of so many others, was not encouraging.

A.D. 355.

A.D. 358.

A.D. 392.

A.D. 406.

* See Lect. III. p. 139. † Lect. V. p. 234.

Between this repulse and the arrival of Attila and his Huns upon the Rhine, a name arises among the Frank confederacy—and it is little more than a name,—which has been seized upon to form the basis of a dynastic establishment and a national history. About 448, Merowig, or Merwig—the word has been latinized into Merovius,—was elevated, according to traditional custom, upon a buckler, and proclaimed chief of the Franks. The proper names of a barbarous people are universally significative; thus, *mer*, "great," and *wig*, "warrior," are the two elements of the name of the founder of the Merovingian race; as *lot*, nasally aspirated *clot*, "famous," and *hild*, "youth," are those of his more renowned grandson. To this Merovius we must ascribe the origin of the first great dynasty of French history. Of the mythic Pharamond mentioned by some French writers, Gregory of Tours knew nothing, and we may reasonably be contented to know no more. For reasons already recounted, the Franks must bear the disgrace of having fought on both sides in the great battle of civilization at Châlons. But while a portion of the race remained under professed allegiance to Syagrius, the representative of Roman authority in Gaul, their boldest tribe, the Salii, recognizing Clovis as their chief at the early age of sixteen, appear to have adopted designs of extensive conquest, if not of independent and powerful political organization. The two impulses must not be regarded as identical; for here we arrive at a very considerable and important divergence of opinion among historical authorities. French writers, from a natural desire to give *éclat* to their national "origines," and to elaborate French history, from the fifth century to the present time, as one great and coherent whole, have assigned to the kingdom of Clovis a settled character, and to Clovis himself a knowledge of statecraft and a capacity for political conceptions, with a power of carrying them out, consistent

A.D. 488.

A.D. 451.

A.D. 481.

with their ideal of a monarch who was the legitimate precursor of Charlemagne, Louis XIV., and Napoleon I.

But others, with whom I must venture to express my agreement, have been unable to recognize in the blood-stained barbarian of Soissons and Tolbiac, surrounded by his half-clad and disorderly warriors, one of those few men, the really great names of history, who, as legislators or organizers, have raised their rude countrymen to the dignity of national life. "In most French writers," says Sir J. Stephen, "in Gibbon's History, and even in the Lectures of M. Guizot, Clovis and Clotaire sweep across the historic stage in the garb and character of heroes. Their campaigns are depicted in colours brilliant enough to reflect the glories of Napoleon. The doctrines of Aristotle and of Montesquieu are invoked to interpret to us the enigmas of their policy; and the revolutions of their kingdom are announced in terms such as might fitly celebrate the overthrow of the empire of the Cæsars."

Though, for reasons which may be stated in his own words, we think Gibbon ought perhaps to be excepted from this catalogue, Sir James is in the main undoubtedly right. Clovis *was* an "*untutored savage*," the dominant instinct of whose mind was a thirst for blood, which he indulged without scruple, or remorse, or limitation by the precepts of the religion which he externally embraced: he loved conquest, as his warriors loved it,—for the sake of spoil, and gave no indication of any real desire for the social organization of the countries he subdued, or even of the people over whom he ruled in right of military election. His desire for the invasion and "annexation" of the Arian Visigoths was simply inspired by the goodness of the lands which they occupied; and his strongest feelings in regard to the sacrifice of Him in whose name he had been baptized, was a passionate wish to do battle with the Jews on the hill of Calvary. Nor is the judgment of Gibbon materially different. "The

monarchy," he says, "was left without any regular establishment of justice, of arms, or of revenue. The successors of Clovis wanted resolution to assume, or strength to exercise, the legislative and executive powers which the people had abdicated: the royal prerogative was distinguished only by a more ample privilege of rapine and murder; and the love of freedom, so often invigorated and disgraced by private ambition, was reduced, among the licentious Franks, to the contempt of order and the desire of impunity."*

I do not assert that in Clovis such feelings and notions were extraordinary, or even greatly culpable. It is unjust to blame a man for not being beyond his age; but let it be admitted that Clovis and his people were *not* beyond it; otherwise our conceptions of it and of them can possess no historical value. The age is not yet a civilized age; a great social revolution has yet to be wrought out; we have still long to wait before Law, Order, and settled Government emerge from the reign of Force, or before we can discover the great image of France in the chaotic annals of Gaul. The distinction is an important one; yet it is not seldom forgotten, or purposely confused. It has suited the dynastic ambition of French rulers to stand before the imagination of Europe as the legitimate, if not the lineal, successors and representatives of Charlemagne. This has seemed to them to imply a grandeur for the France of the past, to which the France of the present undoubtedly succeeds; perhaps it has also not obscurely suggested for her the frontier of the Alps, the Pyrenees, and the Rhine. But, unfortunately for the argument, it implies a great deal more; it would justify a claim to half the territories in Europe. Charlemagne, as successor to Pepin, "king of the Franks," cannot be regarded as actual ruler of more than a third of the modern kingdom of France. Aquitaine was still Roman; the Germans maintained their possessions west of the Rhine; the Bretons stood fast in the Armorican peninsula, and

* Gibbon, ch. xxxviii.

never paid a more than momentary and dubious allegiance to the head of the Carlovingian house. But Charlemagne, as emperor of the West, ruled all France, all Switzerland, all Italy, nearly all Germany, and half of Spain. The Franks of Gaul, who obeyed the Merovingian kings, were only a small portion of their people. The federation had, at least, one of their original seats in Franconia, on the other side of the Rhine, and there still dwelt the most legitimate possessors of the Frankish name. They were Germans, essentially distinct, in all national attributes, from the mixed population who occupied what was still called Gaul. Similarly, after the Norman Conquest, the most numerous, and the most genuine, because the least mixed in blood of the Norman race, were dwelling in the province of Normandy, beyond the sea. It is not probable that the Franks effected a more permanent change in the national character of those whom they invaded, than the Normans did in the parallel case. Both constituted a very small element of the new nation, which gradually grew up from the fusion of the conquering and the conquered race. But there is this important difference,—Roman Gaul became France; Saxon England never became Normandy. The Normans were never able to eliminate the old Teutonic appellative, and affix their name to the "land of the Angles." They were, themselves, absorbed into the nationality of the great people whom they had beaten in one decisive battle. The denationalized Romano-Gallic inhabitants of the Province were as little able to resist the name, as they were able to resist the battleaxe of their new master. They supplied him with a language, yet they were compelled to accept their appellation at his hands, and Gaul has gradually adopted a title which originally and correctly only belonged to a third of the whole country. It follows from all this, that there is no national unity and coherence in the histories of ancient Gaul and modern France; that the house of Valois, or of Bourbon, had no more grounds for identifying

themselves with the rights and traditions of the great Carlovingian empire, than William Rufus, or Robert the Devil, could have had for claiming to share in the rights and traditions of Alfred and the Heptarchy; and finally, that if the empire ruled by the German Charlemagne, from Aachen and Ingelheim, confer upon the ruler of Paris a right to the frontier of the Rhine, it also confers upon him a right to Switzerland, Italy, the Spanish Marches, and Germany, as far as the banks of the Vistula. Or, to put the matter in another way, if imperial traditions and the doctrine of natural frontiers, give Mayence to France, Germany, upon the same grounds, has an equal right to claim Bordeaux.

A.D. 486. At the age of one-and-twenty, Clovis found himself at the head of the Salian Franks, whose central position was at Tournesis, or Tournay. Rome yet retained within her feeble hold a district independent of the barbarians, of which the governor was Syagrius, and the chief city Soissons. Two such neighbours could not long retain their relative position. On the one side was a community in the last stage of decadence, without patriotic spirit, moral strength, or martial skill; on the other, a young society, trained to war and rapine as the main object of its being, and uniting to the energy of youth contempt for its foe and the confidence inspired by victories already won. The result may be imagined. Clovis set forth with the intent to conquer Syagrius, perhaps with the hope of mastering the whole of Gaul. The first object he instantly

A.D. 486. achieved at the battle of Soissons, in 486. The next step in his progress was his union with Clotilda, the Catholic niece of the Arian king of the Burgundians.* Dr. Arnold might well have specified this among the marriages which have in a great measure determined the course of modern history; for this union of Clovis with Clotilda did what a union with no other woman

* *Vide* suprà; and Arnold's Lectures, ii. p. 114.

in Europe could have done, — brought him within the great and growing influence of the orthodox Latin church. What the position of the Church was, between the Barbarians on the one side, and the Empire on the other, we have already seen in part, and we shall hereafter more particularly explain; but the situation had been complicated by the establishment of the Visigoth and Burgundian kingdoms, whose rulers professed the Arian heresy. The Catholics, then, as the stay of imperial support was gradually withdrawn beyond the Alps, felt the necessity of some other equally powerful support against the secular auxiliaries whom their Arian rivals had acquired, and who, they well knew, would be used against the interests of the orthodox church. At this very crisis, the Frank appeared in the northern horizon, and, by a masterpiece of policy, they secured his aid. Nor, if the invader brought assistance to the Church, was the Church less useful to the invader: she could smooth the way for his advance among the old semi-Roman population, where her authority was respected, by conciliating their affections towards a co-religionist, and by representing the redoubtable leader of those terrible legions as the child and champion of the faith. To those who look with reverential eyes for the working out of God's purposes through the ages, though dimmed, perchance, and rendered doubtful by the imperfection of the agency employed in their development, this marriage of the wild Frank king with the Christian princess of Burgundy is one of those events which stand out like a star in the night of human history. The conversion of Clovis was, doubtless, long determined upon; but the narrative of its occurrence has a touch of the old Homeric strain. An immense band of barbarians, fresher from their forests, and, therefore, more fierce and dreadful than the Franks themselves, were advancing rapidly upon Gaul. Clovis rushed to the rescue, and met them at Tolbiac. There, in the "cur-

A.D. 496.

rent of a heady fight," when he saw his battalions waver beneath the furious charges of the enemy, he cried to the God of Clotilda for help, and vowed to adore Him if he might yet restore the day. He conquered; and he kept his vow. At Rheims, he received the rite of Christian baptism from its bishop, St. Remi, amid more than the usual pageantry and splendour of the Catholic ceremonial. A thousand lamps blazed before an altar decked with jewels and gold; clouds of incense rolled to the roof, perfuming the air with the spices of the East; the officiating priests were gorgeous in purple, scarlet, and white; a crowd of catechumens marched in procession, laden with flowers. "Father," said the astonished barbarian, "is this the heaven thou hast promised us?" "It is the path to it," replied the politic priest. He then proceeded to the ceremony.* "Sicamber, meekly bow thy head; burn that which thou hast worshipped, and worship that which thou hast burned," was the address, already quoted, which welcomed this renowned proselyte into the bosom of Christianity. Three thousand of his warriors followed their chief's example. Thus, says Michelet, did the Church take solemn possession of the barbarians. The subsequent career of Clovis was a succession of triumphs. Gondebauld, the Burgundian king, had murdered Clotilda's father. Clovis determined upon revenge, or rather upon indulging his passion for new territory and rich spoil, under the plea of retribution. It was in vain that Gondebauld made most important concessions to the Catholic bishops, and strove to conciliate the old Roman population by a revision of the national laws in their favour. The iron hand was upon him; he was defeated, after a bloody battle, at Dijon, on the Ousche; his kingdom was subdued, and all the cities on the Saone and the Rhone obeyed the orthodox prelates and the Frank king.

A.D. 500.

* These details are given in Hincmar's Life of St. Remi.

The Visigoths were the next victims. "It offends me," said the royal propagandist, "that these Arians should possess the fairest portion of the land. Let us, with God's help, seize upon it. We shall do well; for it is very good."* Euric, the Visigoth king, was a great monarch, and, in many respects, a wise one; but he bitterly persecuted the Catholics, and blocked up the way to their churches with thorns.† Clovis eagerly assumed the character of champion of his injured brethren and defender of the rights of the Church. The favour of Heaven was palpably manifested in his behalf. Portents went before him, and supernatural guides directed his steps. A hart, of gigantic size, led his army to a ford at a place in Viennes, which still recalls, by its name, the memory of the incident. A watch-tower or Pharos of fire, like the pillar which burnt before the steps of wandering Israel, blazed for his guidance on the cathedral of Poitiers. St. Martin's property was carefully protected; for when a soldier had stolen some hay from a peasant on his land, Clovis "had his head off in an instant,"‡ and exclaimed, "What hope can we have of victory, if the blessed Martin is offended?" St. Martin showed his gratitude by the result of divinations, taken from the words of the service in the church of Tours. In return, the invader protected St. Martin's property, to the smallest tittle, from rapine and destruction. Such is the tale told, in his anxiety to honour the champion of the Catholic cause, by the credulous or imaginative Gregory of Tours. It is as mythical as the labours of Hercules, or the expedition of Jason; but the battle of Vouglè is a great fact. At Vouglè, behind Poitiers, Alaric II. and his Visigoths succumbed to the irresistible wielder of the Frankish battleaxe, and Alaric was slaughtered

* Gregory of Tours, ii. 37.

† *Ibid.* ii. 25,—"Scilicet ut raritas ingrediendi oblivionem faceret fidei."

‡ *Ibid.* ii. 37,—"Dicto citius gladio perempto."

in the rout. The victor passed the winter at Bordeaux, and then advanced as far as Languedoc. He captured both Angoulême and Toulouse, while his son overran Auvergne; but, at last, he was arrested by an adversary, greater even than himself, both as a warrior and a king. Theodoric, with the Italian Ostrogoths, covered Provence and Spain; it is most probable that he severely defeated* the Franks, and saved for the infant son of Alaric—who was also his own grandson—a remnant of his hereditary kingdoms,—the first province of Narbonne, or, as it was sometimes called, Septimania. Meantime, Auvergne, with its volcanic hills and intricate passes, the stronghold of Roman influence in Gaul, had been subdued by Thierry, the king's eldest son. An attack upon Armorica, the Wales of Gaul, was less successful. The remnants of the brave old Celtic race defended themselves with the national pertinacity and courage, and the Franks were compelled to fall back. But elsewhere, they continued their devastating course. "Clovis," says a French historian,† "whose ambition was not diminished, or his ferocity softened by religion, undertook to subdue these people; and, in order to succeed, he employed both perfidy and violence against their kings, most of whom were his relations: he caused some to be assassinated, and others he slew with his own hand. At length, by means of victories and murders, he united the whole country comprised within the Rhine, the Rhone, the Ocean, and the Pyrenees, under his authority."

Such was the founder of the Merovingian dynasty,—such the character of its conquests. Its fame crossed the Alps, and traversed the Mediterranean. There seems little reason to doubt that Clovis received the consular insignia and title

* See Jornandes, "de Rebus Geticis," c. 58, who says that there *was* a battle, and that the Franks lost thirty thousand men. "Nunquam," he adds, with characteristic pride and patriotism, "Gothus Francis cessit dum viveret Theodoricus."

† Bonnechose, Hist. France, p. 14.

of Patrician from Anastasius, emperor of the East. By the Roman ecclesiastics, upon whom his favours were showered, he was treated with especial honour. First of French kings, he received the title of Eldest son of the Church. "God," says the worthy bishop of Tours, "frustrated his enemies daily before him, and increased his realm, because he walked with upright heart before Him, and did what was pleasing in His eyes."* Strange must have been the age which deemed the things done by Clovis pleasing in the eyes of Heaven! But Clovis was innocent and merciful compared with the sanguinary Clotaire. Even Clotaire, however, as a champion of the Catholics, is an immense favourite with Gregory, notwithstanding his frightful crimes, which the worthy bishop represents him as calling "actions which *perhaps* he had *carelessly* done" [actiones quas *fortasse negligenter egerit!*] He is delighted with the king's prayers to St. Martin of Tours, whose powerful intercession with God the royal penitent requested for the deeds he had done "without due consideration" [irrationabiliter]; meaning thereby perjuries, murders, adulteries, and cruelties of the most barbarous kind. So difficult is it to gather from contemporaries the true character of men and their actions.†

When Clovis died, in 511, his dominions were divided among his four sons. Each was styled "king;" a fact which proves that we should be wrong, if we attached to the Teutonic title of "König" any more specific or exalted notion than that implied by the less pretentious appellation of Chief. The Frank king was indeed a chieftain, a great chieftain, but nothing more. Raised upon the buckler, he was hailed by the acclamation of his countrymen as their leader in war; and they conceded to him, as was conceded to the Homeric king, the first place in counsel and in fight, and the choicest of the spoil.‡ But he never occupied a

A.D. 511.

* Gregory of Tours, ii. 40. † *Ibid.* iv. 21.

‡ We have already mentioned the practice, and ought to have referred

position at all resembling that of the absolute or the constitutional monarch of modern times. The oft-repeated story of the "vase of Soissons" is generally quoted as sufficient evidence of the fact. Guizot, in his "Essays on the History of France," has collected other and still more conclusive testimony, to which it is unnecessary to refer; but the conclusion to be drawn from the whole matter is that which we have already asserted. The kingdom of Clovis had not emerged from the chaos of barbarism into the region of order, law, settled institutions, and regular government. It may have suggested the idea, and exhibited the possibility, of a great Frank empire; it cannot be said to have realized it in practice.

For one hundred and seventy years from the death of Clovis, the long-haired Salians shared among themselves the lands of Gaul, sometimes wielding a single sceptre, but more frequently as the three or four rival possessors of precarious thrones. But wherever we cast our eyes through this protracted period, they fall upon bloodshed, treachery, and strife. The Merovingian annals are one of the most painful portions of the story of the human race; from first to last they present the dismal picture of "treasons, stratagems, and spoils," where bloodstained tyrants, cruel and licentious queens, ambitious nobles, and intriguing churchmen, pass and repass in inextricable confusion, ever shifting their relative places before the eyes in a sort of Walpurgis revel, like the figures of a horrible phantasmagoria. "The facts of these times," says our great medieval historian, "are of little other importance than as they impress on the mind a thorough notion of the extreme wickedness of almost every person concerned in them, and, consequently, of the state to which

to the passage of Tacitus which establishes its antiquity:—"Impositus scuto, more gentis, et *sustinentium humeris vibratus*, dux deligitur."—(Tac. *Hist.* iv. 15.) Is not this the origin of "chairing" newly-elected members of parliament?

society was reduced. But there is no advantage in crowding the memory with barbarian wars and assassinations."*

This may well excuse us from dwelling upon the unprofitable subject within our very limited space. Nevertheless, if we review the history of France under the Merovingian house, several points of importance for its right comprehension will, I think, at once suggest themselves to our minds. On these we must for a moment dwell.

(1.) The partition of the country among the sons of Clovis does not appear to have been founded so much upon local as upon military considerations; it was, in fact, a division of the army, not of the soil. This, the position of the capitals, Metz, Soissons, Paris, and Orleans, sufficiently proves. They certainly could not have been territorial centres; for their mutual distance, regarded in reference to the superficial area of France, is inconsiderable. Under these circumstances, the opinion of Sismondi carries with it an air of great probability,—that the object was to secure to each chief an equal number of native-born Franks as subjects. The selected capitals would, in this case, be "centres of force," as Hallam calls them, from which the brothers might render assistance to each other in case of national revolt. But this must also have had another result. The unemployed warriors would naturally flock from one banner to the other, as the character of the chief, or the nature of his position, promised the chance of winning spoil or glory in the field. Among the hundred thousand men who followed the grandson of Clovis across the Alps, there were doubtless recruits from all the four kingdoms of the Franks.

(2.) The whole Frank nation soon assumed a twofold division, very clearly and positively defined. In political interests, in national habits, in the character of their laws,

* Hallam, Middle Ages, vol. i. p. 5.

their institutions, and their whole social organization, the Eastern, or Austrasian, were strongly distinguished from the Western, or Neustrian Franks. The latter, in succeeding to the occupation of the Romano-Gallic provinces, like so many other barbaric races of kindred blood, had very largely assimilated the civilization into the centre of which they had so suddenly plunged. But the German element still predominated in the east. Proximity to the original seats of their race, and absence from contact with civilizing influences, kept alive among them the spirit of their Teutonic ancestors, with many of the habits, practices, and ideas of the old free life in the wild forests of their Fatherland. The Austrasian, therefore, exhibited a greater rigidity of character, with a ruder and perhaps fresher sentiment of nationality; while the more pliant Neustrian readily suffered himself to be absorbed into the surrounding mass of Romanic habits and institutions. It has been conjectured with great probability, that the distinction between Austrasia and Neustria very nearly corresponds with the much older distinction between Ripuarian and Salian Franks. It is difficult to fix the exact limits of the two territories. Indeed Austrasia, in its widest limits, is sometimes taken to include all the outlying German tribes and dependencies,—Alemanni, Bavarians, Thuringians, or Frisians,—who at any moment claimed to form part of the Frank confederacy. It was itself, in its more limited signification, subdivided into Upper Austrasia, which abutted upon the Moselle, and Lower Austrasia, between the Rhine and the Meuse. Neustria had for its northern boundary the Ocean, and for its southern the Loire. On the south-west it was separated from Burgundy by an artificial line from Gien, on the Loire, to Arras, on the Aube. On the Aube, again, began its line of demarcation from Austrasia,—a line which, crossing the Marne, the Aisne, and the Oise, coincided with the Scheldt to the west of Cambrai. Upon a clear conception of the physical, moral, and

political distinction between these two great districts, depends the right understanding of the whole early history of France.

(3.) The Merovingian Franks had been converted by the Latin clergy, and became members of the Latin church. All their brother barbarians were of heretical belief. Hence the Roman ecclesiastics, who were the only annalists of the period, viewed all the incidents of their age from a Catholic stand-point in religion and a Frankish stand-point in politics. We hear nothing from them of the religious conversion of the Goths, Vandals, and other tribes who adopted Arianism; for to the orthodox, such a conversion seemed unworthy of the name; nor, again, had these men the national sympathies which might have enabled them to understand, or ourselves to infer from their writings, the policy, the objects, or the real character of the great Arian monarchs. Nor is this all. The Franks did not, like their Burgundian and Visigoth neighbours, throw themselves into the form of social organization which they found in the lands they conquered, nor adopt civil, military, and ecclesiastical institutions, in which they, and the people of the country, might equally, or nearly equally, participate. Like the Heracleids and other conquering races, they remained an army of occupation with imperial functions, among a subject population. But for a long time they did not assume the sacerdotal office. The religious element of the national authority they abandoned with contempt, perhaps with superstitious reverence, to the more instructed class from whom they had derived their religion itself. While the Arian clergy of the Gothic and Burgundian nations were probably Goths and Burgundians, the Frankish clergy were never Franks, except when the tonsure was inflicted as a safeguard or a punishment upon some rival prince or rebellious warrior. It is plain that this circumstance must have exercised a very notable influence upon the relations of the Church with the monarchy and

people in Merovingian times,—and facts, otherwise most difficult of explanation, abundantly confirm the *à priori* conclusion.

(4.) The relations of the Merovingians with Italy, when contrasted with those of their Carlovingian successors, are very instructive, as tending to show how entirely the former were destitute of what we might call a definite foreign policy; how little, in short, their military expeditions differed in character from the freebooting forays of their Teutonic fathers. When the house of the great Theodoric was about to fall, and the authority of the Greek emperor was restored in Italy for a short season by the arms of Belisarius and Narses, the Franks were placed in a position which might have enabled them to incline the balance of power to either side, and, in modern parlance, to become masters of the situation. Both Justinian, the Greek emperor, and Theodatus, the Ostrogoth king, courted their alliance; both were ready to buy their swords. Justinian invoked their orthodox sympathies against a heretic dynasty and people; his letter, recorded by Procopius, is a singular and valuable record, which casts no little light upon the times. "The Goths," he complains, "though they have deprived us of Italy by main force, not only have not shown the slightest indication of restoring it, but have, unprovoked, heaped fresh insults upon our heads, neither trivial nor endurable. We are, therefore, compelled to make war upon them; and it is reasonable that you should aid us in it, for you hold, as ourselves, the orthodox doctrine which rejects the errors of Arius, and you also bear a common animosity against the Goths." * After all, however, the cunning Greek relied with greater confidence upon handsome payments in current coin, and promises still more lavish. This, unfortunately, was a trial of

* Procopius, Bell. Goth. i. 5.

strength, in which the Goths were quite a match for him. They proffered, on their part, the magnificent bribe of two thousand pounds of solid gold, and the Gothic possessions in Gaul. The Franks had accepted the first offer; they made no difficulty about accepting the second. All the Gothic possessions in Gaul, lying between the Rhone, the Alps, and the sea, were transferred to the Merovingian kings. In return, though they had some scruple about appearing themselves in arms against their ally, the Greek emperor, they sent the Burgundians to assist the Ostrogoths in the sack of Milan. The rich booty which the victors brought back over the Alps, removed the scruples, or irresistibly excited the cupidity, of the Franks, and Theudebert, at the head of 100,000 men, entered Italy. Both parties had reason to believe that he came as an ally: both were deceived. With admirable impartiality, he attacked, defeated, slaughtered, and plundered both alike. With such an army in the plains of Lombardy, had Theudebert been capable of a policy, or his people of a conquest, he might have anticipated the *rôle* of Pepin or Charlemagne. But the army melted away as it had come, and the imperial generals, at the head of a few thousand men, were permitted, as we have seen, to extinguish the Ostrogoths, and to make themselves undisputed masters of the peninsula. A.D. 536.

They did not remain so, as we know. The Lombards soon became more formidable enemies to the emperor than ever the Ostrogoths had been. Again the Byzantines bethought them of the Franks. Maurice, the emperor, made the same appeal to their orthodoxy, backed by the same more cogent arguments. For 50,000 solidi they agreed to come to the aid of the imperial cause and the Catholic faith. The young king, Childebert, crossed the Alps at the head of an army strong enough to eject both Greek and Lombard from the contested territory. But A.D. 584.

upon his arrival at the scene of action, the barbarian broke forth in his nature, or rather, was evoked by the politic conduct of the Lombards. They captivated the fancy of the semi-savage by magnificent presents, and he returned home without inflicting any injury upon the donors. Maurice was furious, and demanded repayment of his 50,000 solidi, a request which the Frank received with the most sublime contempt. But by way of equalizing his favours, he sent word next year to the emperor, that he was ready to fulfil his promise, and proceeded to attack his late friends the Lombards. This time the Lombards were prepared for him, and inflicted upon his over-confident host a severe and well-deserved defeat. But the whole series of transactions exhibits the Merovingian king as little better than a brigand chief, or as the captain of a company of free lances ready to sell his mercenary aid to the highest bidder. It is not until the rise of the stronger Carlovingians that we recognize the civil and military organization among the ruled, and that unity of policy and purpose in the ruler, which constitute a great kingdom, capable of performing a conspicuous and influential part in the destinies of the world.

(5.) However dynastic ambition, quarrels between rival houses, and the intrigues of contending aspirants for an unsettled throne, fostered by the very anomalous condition of society in this chaotic era, may seem sufficient to account for its turbulent and miserable character, upon a careful study of the whole, we must, I think, feel convinced that the real cause of all the existing anarchy is to be found in the fixed purpose of the great territorial lords to shake themselves free from the trammels of anything resembling a sovereign authority, and to assert a practical equality with the nominal ruler of the race. The whole period exhibits one great struggle on the part of the Austrasian aristocracy to establish their political independence; and as the mem-

bers of this aristocracy were barbarians, the movement was marked with the irregular impulses and savage actions which belong to the personal character of its principal instigators. Still it was nothing less than an organized revolution, which for the time being prevented society from coalescing into the form of a settled polity, and it sufficiently accounts for the inability of the Salian kings to establish a regular government, with its complex machinery of finance, police, and legislation. The tendency of property to accumulate in the hands of a privileged few, was fatal at one and the same time to the stability of the throne and the independence of the people. The lower orders hated the great seigneurs and rebelled against them; the great seigneurs could not tolerate the king, and conspired against his authority. It was this influence that operated, after the death of Sigebert, against the attempt at centralization, and the Romanizing, so to speak, of Frank institutions essayed with considerable prospect of success by the powerful and politic Brunhilda. Her resistance to the growing power of the seigneurs, long vigorously maintained, but finally unsuccessful, caused the strange vicissitudes of her eventful life, and terminated in her ghastly death. During the protracted contest in which she was engaged with her terrible rival Fredegonde, she had been compelled to guarantee, at the treaty of Andelot, A.D. 587, the hereditary and perpetual possession of their *beneficia* to the nobles. By this act she sealed the fate of the Merovingian dynasty; for, without entering into the prolix controversy concerning the exact nature of these *beneficia*, and the tenure by which they were held, we may assume as certain, that they differed from the allodial lands in being more within the disposition of the sovereign, and if not universally, at least frequently and under certain conditions, revocable at his pleasure. When these passed absolutely into the hands of the seigneurs, they were emancipated from all further restraint, and their power

gradually increased and expanded, until it overshadowed the throne, and eventually, in the persons of the Maires du Palais, extinguished it altogether.

But perhaps the most remarkable indication of the disposition of the seigneurs towards the throne is afforded by the support which they gave for a time to Gundobald, the leader of a Gallo-Roman reaction, the last effort of the old population against the reigning Merovingian dynasty. The adventures of this pretender, like those of our own Perkin Warbeck, might furnish matter for a vivid and touching romance. The reputed son of Clotaire I., he had been alternately caressed and humiliated by the monarchs of his family. He ultimately escaped into Italy, where he was kindly received by Narses, the imperial general. We hear of him next at the court of the Greek emperor, who received him as Perkin was received in Scotland, and, probably from designs of his own in connection with the West, furnished him with the means of maintaining some degree of state. Such was the man invited into Gaul as a candidate for empire, by a temporary coalition between the ambitious nobles of Austrasia and a discontented remnant of the old Gallo-Roman inhabitants of Southern Gaul. Inspired with Greek ideas, and carrying with him somewhat of the prestige of the Roman name, he naturally recommended himself to those aspiring spirits among the conquered population who still remembered the traditions of the Empire and were eager to revive them. But why should his coming have been welcomed by those very German nobles who were the leaders of the conquering race, and whose interests were bound up with the stability of its position and the permanence of its power? Their object is sufficiently plain. They meant to rule, but it was difficult to do so in their own persons, because the attachment of the Frank nation to the persons of the reigning family was based upon a traditional reverence, which approached to superstition. It was necessary,

therefore, to rule in the person of another, who might exhibit to the world the outward show and ceremonial of royalty, while he left to themselves the realities of power. Such a puppet king they hoped to find in Gundobald, a member of the Merovingian race, yet the mere nominee of the feeble ruler of Constantinople; nor, perhaps, was it easy to discover another man who could equally fulfil all the necessary conditions. Yet they slew him under circumstances of the basest treachery, and for a brief season his death retarded their designs. They finally succeeded, but in another way.

They succeeded in the persons of the "Mayors of the Palace,"—an institution not unlike those parasitical plants which destroy the growth of the tree that they apparently support and adorn. All the common histories of France contain an account of this "Mayoralty," and of the means whereby its holders eventually became masters of the monarchy. The fact was too patent to escape the dullest observation. Nevertheless, as these accounts are in some instances not very accurate or perspicuous, it will be desirable to refer very briefly to the origin of the office, and the causes which contributed to bestow upon it the predominant importance which it so soon acquired. The Franks entered Gaul as conquerors—barbarian conquerors, to whom territorial confiscation was the natural consequence of successful invasion. They soon, therefore, found themselves in possession of houses and lands, flocks and herds, men-servants and women-servants, all secured to them by the full and sufficient tenure of the sword. In the division of the spoil, the "König" of course received the lion's share. Each victorious battle conferred upon him a magnificent estate upon the banks of the Meuse, the Seine, the Loire, or the Rhone. When not actually engaged in war, his time was spent in making royal progresses from one of these estates to another, in the rude chariot of the age, drawn by a yoke of oxen. Accompanied by his barbaric court, he passed from

castle to castle, consuming the produce of each district in turn, amid the wild and drunken festivities which have perhaps not unjustly been considered as the great reproach of the German race. It is also probable that the elaborate *entourage* of the Byzantine court had captivated the barbaric fancy, and that the rude König of the Frank tribes delighted to reproduce around himself somewhat of the splendid ceremonial which was now all that remained of their former glory to the successors of the Cæsars. At Metz, Soissons, or Paris, we hear of the *Cubicularius* and *Camerarius*, chamberlain and treasurer; *Referendarius*, chancellor; *Comes-stabuli*, master of the horse, as we hear of the similar officers at Constantinople. But superior to all in rank, as in the reality of power, was the Major-domûs, or master of the household, who acted as steward of all the king's estates and the superintendent of his personal attendants. It is easy to see how such a personage, when possessed of the requisite ability, must have taken a leading part, and exerted a powerful influence in all the more important affairs of the court, so as eventually to expand from something like a house bailiff into a prime minister or chancellor of the exchequer. As commander of the royal retinue, the mayor was compelled to assume a prominent part in the management of the army, and the Merovingian kings, as they gradually became more and more deficient in warlike virtues and military skill, were induced to resign their most important functions to their representative in the campaign or upon the field of battle. But it was as president of the great council, more than in any other capacity, that the Major-domûs appeared in an important character, and assumed a predominating influence. To the great council were admitted the courtiers or officers of the royal household, the "Antrustriones" or "Principes" of Tacitus, who, if they were not an hereditary nobility, occupied at least an analogous position;—the hereditary dukes of what we may be permitted,

by a pardonable anachronism, to call the great fiefs, or semi-independent nationalities of Alemannia and Bavaria;—the patricii of Burgundy and Ripuaria;—the dukes and counts who governed the provinces;—and, though last, by no means least in splendour and importance, the dignitaries of the Catholic church.

As practically directing the deliberations of such a body, the Mayors of the palace naturally acquired a position and authority which easily explains their subsequent assumption of the realities of power. They became the leaders and mouthpieces of that great anti-monarchical movement among the seigneurs, which may be regarded as having eventually triumphed in the degradation and atrocious murder of Brunhilda. It is true that the nobles, like the horse in the fable, invoked the assistance of the man to expel the stag from their domains, and were deservedly bitted and bridled, and taught their paces, by that stout Carlovingian arm; but it cannot be disputed, that it was as a leader of the aristocratic faction that Pepin-le-Vieux, the founder of the race, acquired that dominant influence which he transmitted to Pepin of Heristal and his sons. Sismondi, anxious, perhaps, to assign a more dignified origin to so great an office, has derived Major-domûs from *Moord-dom*, "judge of murderers;" but this etymology is little accepted; and few writers follow him in questioning the more domestic character of the primitive functions discharged by the powerful bearer of this humble name. By Gregory of Tours, our great authority for the early history of the Franks, the mayors are seldom mentioned. We may, therefore, venture to assume, that in his time they had not acquired any preponderating influence. It is, as we have said, to the fall of Brunhilda that we must assign the solid establishment of their political position. The very first result of that aristocratical victory was, to make the office elective,

and independent of the crown. The change applied to Neustria as well as to Austrasia; but the soil of the latter country was, for many reasons, more propitious to the growth of the parasite power, which formed so treacherous a prop to the falling monarchy. There the German element continued to maintain its preponderance; and, unhappily or happily, it was permanently arrayed against the court; for the court, the natural home of luxury and pleasure, submitted, as courts always do, to the influence of a superior civilization, and bestowed its special favour upon those who brought the grace of art and the refinements of sensualism within the compass of its enjoyments.

The old provincial semi-Roman society, therefore, was paramount at court; because, whatever may have been its moral inaptitude for the duty of shaping out the destinies of a rising nation, its political decadence did not rob it of that external polish which it had received from its connection with the ancient Mistress of the World. With the influence paramount at court, the interest of the seigneurs was necessarily at variance; and where the seigneurs were strongest, there was the most favourable field for the growth of the new power. Accordingly, after the atrocious murder of Brunhilda, though Clotaire II. nominally succeeded to the whole kingdom of the Franks, the real government of the nation rested on the Bishop Arnulph, or Arnoulf, and the Mayor of the palace, Pepin of Landen, or Pepin-le-Vieux, as he is sometimes called, to distinguish him from successors of the same name. By their advice, the king made over to his son Dagobert the greater portion of Austrasia during his own lifetime, with the understanding that the colleagues should administer it for him. While Dagobert was a minor, Austrasia flourished beneath their wise direction; and the chronicles enlarge upon its prosperity and military renown. To their influence also must be ascribed the large accession

to his dominions, which the undutiful Dagobert wrung from his father after a quarrel, decided by the arbitration of twelve Austrasian seigneurs, of which number Arnulph was one. Perhaps the crisis of the revolution by which the ancestors of the Carlovingians supplanted the ruling prince, is most clearly indicated by the edicts of Clotaire, which have been compared to our own Magna Charta. They resemble it, indeed, so far as they secure protection for the nobles and ecclesiastics against the arbitrary exactions of the king, and confirm them in their own usurpations; but these exhibit little reference to those popular rights which our own great Charta recognizes in A.D. 628. their germ. Clotaire died in 628; and, as his other son, Charibert, soon followed him to the grave, Dagobert alone remained, and commenced his reign under the auspices of his two great ministers. These powerful and patriotic statesmen gave splendour, by the wisdom of their administration, to the government of a monarch not otherwise remarkable for distinguished qualities. For ten years, Austrasia was greatly prosperous and respected; and she owed her greatness, prosperity, and power, to the ancestors of Charlemagne. It was they, it has been well said, who prevented the permanent establishment of absolute power upon the Roman model, and secured to the German population of Austrasia an abiding victory over that amalgam of degraded Romans and corrupted Gauls, which threatened to leaven the European world. To them, under Providence, we owe it that the centre of Europe is at this day German, and not Gallo-Latin.* Dagobert, during the latter part of his life, succumbed to the ordinary temptations of barbarian royalty. Fixing his residence in Paris, he suffered the seductions of what even then was one of the gayest and most luxurious cities in Europe, to corrupt the slender remains of German

* The Franks, by Perry, ch. v.

virtue which still clung to the ancient Merovingian stock. The old monk Fredegar compares him to Solomon, inasmuch as he indulged in the "immoderate luxury" of having three wives at one time, and a very great number of concubines.

A.D. 638. He died in 638, and his voluptuous example was sedulously imitated by his successors, who, inheriting all his vices, without anything of his vigour, sunk, ultimately, to the lowest pitch of imbecility and degradation. They bear, in history, the ignominious title of *Rois fainéans*, or sluggard kings; a term which exactly describes their almost Oriental indolence, and their consequent political nonentity. Eginhard, the famous secretary and biographer of Charlemagne, has left us a graphic picture of these wretched representatives of royalty, which, though so often quoted, must be repeated once more.

"The authority and government were in the hands of the highest officers of the palace, who were called *Majo es-domûs*, and had the entire administration of affairs. Nothing was left to the king, except that, contenting himself with the royal name, he was allowed to sit upon the throne, with long hair and unshorn beard, to play the part of a ruler, to hear the ambassadors, from whatever part they might come, and at their departure communicate to them the answers he had been taught, or even commanded to make, as if by his own authority. The king possessed only one farm, and that by no means a lucrative one, on which he had a dwelling-house and a few servants, just sufficient to supply his most urgent necessities. Wherever he had to go, he travelled in a carriage, drawn by a yoke of oxen, and driven by a cow-herd in rustic fashion. It was thus that he went to the palace, and to the public assembly of the people, which met every year for the good of the kingdom; after which he returned home." *

A pitiable spectacle, truly, and a significant lesson on

* Vita Car. Mag. ch. i.

the effects of self-indulgent sensuality. "The *Rois fainéans*," says Sir J. Stephen, "were *fainéans*, because they had *rien à faire;*" but we must never forget, that the cause of this enforced idleness is to be found in the intellectual impotence engendered by the contact between barbaric passions and civilized debauchery. Pepin died about a year after Dagobert. He was succeeded by Grinovald, his son, who exhibits an instructive example of the failure which attends the most plausible and necessary political changes, when attempted before the time is ripe for their execution. He essayed to accomplish what his immediate successors accomplished with ease—the transference of the royal name to the actual possessor of royal authority; but he perished in the effort. He shaved the hair of Dagobert II.; a symbolic action, implying his degradation from the rank of a freeman, a warrior, and a king; but the ruling monarch of Burgundia and Neustria adopted the cause of his kinsman, and was still strong enough to compass the death of the usurping mayor. We cannot follow the rapid alternations of one *fainéant* monarch after another upon the rival thrones of Neustria and Austrasia, nor the occasional amalgamation of both sovereignties in one insignificant person. Ebroin, a turbulent and unscrupulous but able man, appears upon the scene as mayor of Neustria, in 674. But in the mean time, the house of Pepin-le-Vieux had found a better representative than the ambitious and unfortunate Grinovald. His accomplished daughter Begga, whose praises are eloquently recounted by the chroniclers, had married the lord of Heristal, near Liege; and from this union sprang another Pepin, surnamed of Heristal, from his patrimonial castle. Associated with Martin in the mayoralty of Austrasia, he suffered from the animosity of Ebroin, the rival mayor of Neustria, who fell suddenly upon his two allied rivals, and defeated them in the battle of Lucofaus, near Laon. The luckless Martin was tempted to quit his sanctuary, by an

A.D. 674.

ecclesiastical subterfuge, which resembled the artifice employed by William of Normandy to delude his competitor for the English throne; and was forthwith executed by his perfidious enemies. Pepin was not to be daunted, and made head against his adversary, from whom he was speedily relieved by the dagger of an assassin. The office of Neustrian mayor was filled, soon after, by Berchar, a violent and unwise man, who not only precipitated the war with Austrasia, but, by disgusting the national nobility, drove a number of distinguished Neustrian refugees into the opposite camp. The antagonism between the two great divisions of the Frank empire had now reached its crisis. With a man of genius like Pepin, the crisis had not long to wait for its decision. At the head of his Austrasians, he encountered the Neustrian king, Theodoric, and his mayor of the palace, Berchar, at Testry, on the banks of the Somme. Even on the very eve of battle, Pepin, anxious to avoid bloodshed, proffered reasonable terms. They were refused with contempt; for they were believed to have been dictated by apprehension. The struggle was severe but short. The rude energy of the German swept their half-Roman brethren from the field. The king was taken; Berchar fled, incapable of offering further resistance. From the battle of Testry dates the real foundation of the Carlovingian dynasty. It is true that Pepin, warned, perhaps, by the fate of Grinovald, did not assume the name of king. He kept Theodoric on the throne, and contented himself with the title of *Dux et Princeps Francorum;* but, by a significant innovation, the years of his office were henceforth reckoned in all public documents, with those of the Merovingian monarch.

No sooner had he obtained the direction of affairs, than he inaugurated the policy which his Corlovingian successors so vigorously carried out. Making Austrasia the seat of his own government, he appointed his two sons to rule in the two other divisions of the empire. He then revived the

German assemblies of the *Campus Martius*, which had gradually decayed under the more Romanizing monarchs of the Merovingian race, and by this means strengthened himself for the shock of war which he felt to be impending. By this time, domestic dissension had produced its natural results. The Frank empire was breaking up. All the distant dependencies—Bavarians, Bretons, Alemanni, and Gascons—were attempting to assert their freedom, and had partially succeeded. Pepin reduced them to obedience, or at least, to a pretence of it. But twenty years of warfare were occupied in the task; and it still remained to be completed by Charles Martel. We must not, however, regard Pepin as a mere man of blood. He favoured the propagation of Christianity throughout his dominions; and everywhere held the heathen responsible for the lives of his missionaries. It has been well remarked, "The extraordinary power which Pepin exercised, at a period when law was weak, and authority extended no further than the sword could reach, when the struggles of the rising feudal aristocracy for independence had convulsed the empire, and brought it to the verge of anarchy, sufficiently attests the ability and courage, the wisdom and moderation, with which he ruled." * The assertion is correct, and might be verified at length; but our narrow limits compel us to pass on to another member of the Carlovingian family, akin to Pepin in blood, who was destined to achieve, as his successor, a name still greater than his own; one, indeed, of the very greatest in European history; and yet, perhaps, not so great as that which a discriminating historical criticism may yet assign to it.

Pepin, according to the custom of the age, had married a second wife during the lifetime of his first—"Alpais, the noble and elegant," as the old chronicler calls her. From her sprang Charles Martel, or Charles the

* Perry, Franks, ch. v.

Hammer, — a name which he derived either from the tremendous iron mace before which so many heroes went down in the day of battle, or from his exterminating prowess exercised upon the heathen. The young Charles, like the other Carlovingians, had to wage a dire struggle with his own kindred and countrymen, before he could fix himself firmly in his seat. In this case, the difficulty was aggravated by the unscrupulous ambition of Pepin's first wife, Plectrudis. "Incensed," writes the chronicler, "with incomparable wrath against Charles," she seized his person, and put him into close confinement. But Charles suddenly broke loose from his dungeon, gathered together his partisans, and, after a brief struggle, retaliated upon the queen by seizing her at Cologne. In his prosecution of the war, he was brought to the gates of Paris. Here, in imitation of his predecessor's moderate policy, he offered to be reconciled to the Neustrian king, if the latter would recognize his right to the mayoralty of Austrasia. He besought him to listen to reason, "that the blood of so many noble Franks might not be shed." But Chilperic II., the Neustrian monarch, who had once been a priest, was mad with pride, animosity, and that delusion which God sends into the hearts of kings about to perish. Carl, though at the head of far inferior forces, inflicted upon him a decisive defeat beneath the very walls of the capital, and, leading his army back to Cologne, assumed what was now the practical sovereignty of the Austrasian realm. Chilperic, aware of his perilous situation, looked about him for aid. He found it for a moment in the south. The old Roman Aquitania, in the first division of the spoils of the Empire, had fallen to the Visigoths, who conquered it without much trouble. In the struggle between them and the Merovingians, it of course passed to the victorious party. But the quarrels, so fiercely contested between the different members of the Frank monarchy, prevented them from retaining a distant possession within

A.D. 717.

their grasp; and at this period, Eudo, the duke of Aquitaine, was really an independent prince. The population had never lost its Roman character; it was, in fact, by far the most Romanized in the whole of Gaul. But it had also received a new element in the Vascones, or Gascons, a tribe of Pyrenean mountaineers, who, descending from their mountains, advanced towards the north, until their progress was checked by the broad waters of the Garonne. At this time, however, they obeyed Eudo; and when Eudo accepted the overtures of Chilperic, they formed the main body of the army, with which he appeared before the walls of Paris,—a novel champion in the cause of a Neustrian king! But Neustrians and Vascones together were no match for the redoubtable wielder of the Austrasian hammer. Their armies were defeated, and Carl, following hard upon their rear, drove them over the Loire, upon the spears of the Saracens, who were advancing against Aquitania from Spain. No choice was left to Chilperic but submission; and as Clotaire, the *fainéant* king of Austrasia, had lately died, Carl offered life and even royalty to his rival, upon condition of being declared mayor of the three kingdoms of Neustria, Burgundy, and Austrasia. The terms were, of course, accepted, for there was no alternative, and henceforward Charles Martel stands forth before Christendom as the undisputed lord of the Frank empire, and the leader of its armies. It was high time that Christendom should have a chief and a champion of acknowledged renown to fight her battles. An enemy was at hand still more formidable than the Scourge of God, though he had blackened her fields, destroyed her cities, and menaced the existence of her faith. The Arab horsemen were pouring into the rich and almost defenceless districts of southern Gaul. The striped burnous and glittering spear-heads of these tawny warriors were seen by the terrified peasant winding in an endless coil through the picturesque gorges of the Pyrenees, by Fon-

A.D. 719.

tarabia and Roncesval. In the green meadows that skirt the boundary stream of the Bidassoa, a river so often reddened by the best blood of France and Spain, the fearless riders of the desert were now picketing the indefatigable horses of Arab blood, which had borne them to the headland of St. Sebastian from the banks of the Nile. They had trodden down kingdoms in their path. The inhabitants of South Africa had been consumed in their passage, like the grass of the prairie by the forest fire. The once powerful Visigoths of Spain had succumbed at a single blow, and the craven Roderic had shed those bitter tears, so famed in legend and romance, over the fall of his throne and the slaughter of his people, in the fatal field of Xeres de la Frontera. The cities of Spain yielded to this strange invader almost as soon as he appeared before their gates: he made them entirely his own. In the green Vega of Granada, in the stately streets of Cordova and Seville, arose the glittering marvels of Moorish architecture. Everywhere the Crescent supplanted the Cross, and the terrified remnant of the Christian population were hiding in the Asturian mountains, or among the solitudes of those stern sierras which frown upon the Atlantic waves. Nor were the prospects of resistance to this overwhelming torrent of fanaticism and steel much brighter beyond the Pyrenees. The nominal and natural head of the Christian world upon the banks of the Bosphorus, was almost inclosed within his own capital by the swarming legions of the same victorious enemy; nor could the shadowy terrors of the imperial name affect the descendants of a race which had never known fear or reverence for the Cæsars of a mightier line. Italy itself, which once gave laws to the world, had become, as she has remained, the prize of the strongest stranger that could cross the Alps. The great Ostrogoth, who alone, since the days of Constantine, had grasped the idea of empire, and attempted its realization, had long since vanished from the

scene, and the heritage he left his sons was rent into fragments by the wrangling strife of Lombard kings, Roman pontiffs, and Beneventan dukes. Gaul no longer existed, and France did not as yet exist. The children of the Celts, who had so stoutly fought for freedom against Rome and Cæsar during a quarter of a century, were mourning among the solitary cromlechs of their sea-girt peninsula, over the loss of their nationality, their glory, and their faith. The Roman colonists, whom Cæsar planted over the face of the land which he won with so much toil and blood, had collapsed in the corruption of the Empire, and now, scattered among its barbarian conquerors, possesssed neither a cause, a standard, nor a name. Visigoth and Burgundian had alike failed in effecting a stable settlement, or consolidating a real power. In the Franks alone was the hope of the world; but the Franks were tearing each other to pieces, like the wolves of their native forests, in bloody and internecine war. From the Calabrian headlands to the shores of the German Ocean, no Christian congregation met to worship without terror and consternation; no Christian Litany arose without the prayer for deliverance from the victorious and ever-advancing armies of the infidel. But, as ever in the counsels of Providence, the Time produced the Man. The commanding genius of the warlike Carlovingian, despite of the dangers and difficulties which beset him on all sides, rose to the height of his great office as champion of Christendom, and for a moment concentrated its forces to combat for its existence. We do him scant justice, if we judge him by the spirit or by the events of a later age. We remember the brilliant gathering of churchmen and warriors on the plateau of Clermont, which inaugurated the first crusade; we recall the shouts of the vast multitude wildly agitated by warlike and religious excitement, swelling into a sound of thunder, like that which proclaims the convulsions of nature, as they cried aloud, "It is the will of God! It is the will of

God!" and we picture to ourselves similar scenes in the camp of the Carlovingian king, as the warriors of Europe crowded to the rescue of the Cross. But the era of this romantic religious enthusiasm had not as yet arisen, perhaps never would have arisen, but for the unforgotten emotions of terror and hatred awakened by the sight of the Crescent upon the walls of Narbonne, Bordeaux, Poitiers, and the sacred city of Tours. Even then, as says M. Henri Martin, the latest, and assuredly among the best, of the historians of France, "the Franks had no idea of the destinies confided to their swords." It was ten years since the white tents of the Saracen had been first descried on the southern slopes of the Pyrenees, before Charles could gather together the host which rolled back the tide of invasion. During all this time he was engaged in war with his German neighbours, and was anxiously strengthening his base of operations. The very year before the final conflict, he was compelled to march into Aquitaine against the rebellious Eudo, who had insanely availed himself of the opportunity to attempt his independence—an attempt which was signally and deservedly defeated.

A.D. 731.

But at last he was ready. The iron men trained in the unceasing wars which he himself, his father and grandfather, had waged, not only on Neustrian and Austrasian soil, but beyond the Danube and the Rhine, slowly closed their serried ranks, and descended into that wide plain through which the modern traveller so swiftly passes in his railway-carriage, between Châtelleraut and Poitiers. If he alights at the little station of Les Barres, about eight kilomètres from the former, and twenty-five kilomètres from the latter town, he will find himself near the junction of two inconsiderable rivers, the Clain and the Vienne. If this point be taken as the apex of a triangle, I think it extremely probable that a line representing its base, at about a mile's distance, may be considered to have formed the front of the Frank army; which

would thus secure its rear and flanks against the "whirlwinds of cavalry" which the Mussulmans were wont to pour upon their foe. The right wing of the Saracens probably rested upon Moussais-la-Bataille, and the left upon the banks of the Clain. A Roman road, of which no vestige can now be traced, is said to have run along their front. Local tradition derives the name of Moussais from Musa, an Arab chief, who fell upon the spot. It also points out, at a place still called "La Fosse au Roi," the grave of the unfortunate Arab commander, Abderaman. For seven days the two Worlds, the two Faiths, stood face to face; the horsemen of Asia, with their tawny skins and white turbans, armed with the light steel-tipped jerreed, or the curved scimitar of Damascus, and only defended by a small circular buckler, wheeling amid clouds of dust around the Frankish hosts, scanned with surprise the fair-haired shaggy giants, who, in their steel casques, and cuirasses composed of leather interwoven with iron plates, wielding the long heavy sword, or the still more terrible mace of iron, and battleaxe, which had done such bloody service in the German wars, had come down from their Scandinavian forests to do battle for Europe, against her hitherto irresistible enemy. On a Sunday morning, October, 732—how many great actions have been fought on the day of peace!—the decisive conflict began. It was terrible, though scarcely contested upon equal terms. The wild riders of the desert dashed hour after hour in ceaseless charges against the solidly compacted infantry of the North; they came on like the leaping waves of the ocean, to be scattered backward like its spray. The folds of the eastern turban afforded slight protection against the huge mass of iron which the stalwart arms of the Austrasian veterans plied with terrible effect against their heads; and while the scimitars of Damascus glanced harmlessly from the stout helmets of steel and the thick leather corsets of the Franks, the long heavy blade of the North cleft through bones and

A.D. 732.

muscle, almost severing in two the wiry frames of the Arab and the Moor.

As the day went on, the bodies of men and horses lay so thickly upon the plain, that the Saracens could no longer dash onward with the reckless speed of their nation, against the ranks which had repulsed them since the morning. On a sudden, shouts were heard in the rear, and the light of steel began to glitter through the dense clouds of dust which veiled the south; it was the spears of Aquitaine, led by Eudo, to the great strife. A large portion of the Mussulman host faced about to meet the new enemy. But this only rendered the confusion hopeless. Assailed on both sides, the fiery courage of the sons of the desert at last began to quail, and their squadrons finally recoiled. The slain outnumbered the survivors. Abderaman himself disdained to belong to the last, and as the scattered host retired to their camp, a conviction impressed itself upon their minds that their last great battle on European soil had been fought,—their last triumph over Christendom achieved. By sunrise they were in open flight towards the Pyrenees. The victors drew up in battle-array; but they soon discovered that the vast camp of the enemy had been abandoned, and precipitated themselves with eagerness upon the curious and splendid spoils of Palestine, Egypt, Africa, and Spain. Henceforward Charles receives in history the well-won surname of Martel, or the Hammer. Beneath his redoubtable blows an incredible number of the Saracens had fallen; indeed, the excited imagination of the monkish chronicler raises the roll of the fallen to 375,000.* This is, of course, an immense exaggeration, yet probably as true as the account of Michelet, who treats the whole matter as a mere ordinary skirmish. Hallam, with a juster appreciation of its importance, classifies it with Châlons and Leipsic, as one of the four decisive battles upon which the fate of the modern world has hung.

* Paulus Diaconus, vi. 46.

Regarded as a conflict in behalf of Christianity, the battle of Tours, as it is called, must be considered as purely negative in its results. Michelet is, I believe, nearly singular in his notion that Charles was a pagan,—a notion which rests upon some very vague connection between his surname and the hammer of Thor. We may fairly consider that the aid afforded to Boniface, in his efforts to Christianize the German pagans, and acknowledged in distinct terms by that illustrious founder of missionary enterprise, is of far greater weight than any such fanciful inference. But the national jealousy, or the animosity of Neustria and Burgundy, soon gave him sufficient employment in his rear, to account, without any such hypothesis, for his apparent inactivity. Had anything like political amity subsisted among the different portions of the Gallo-Frankish empire, the Frank battleaxe might have burst through the gates of Cordova and Granada as easily as through those of Pavia and Milan. The infliction of a righteous retribution upon his domestic enemies in the two rebellious kingdoms of Neustria and Burgundy; the conquest and conversion of the Frisian pagans, who gradually yielded to the preaching of the famous Boniface and the sword of the Carlovingian king; the restoration of order in Aquitaine, where Hunold and Hatto, sons of Eudo, forgot their allegiance in a contest for the succession; a second repulse of the Saracens, who had been invited by Christian treachery into Provence, with the siege and sack of Avignon, where they had taken refuge; a Saxon war and a terrible slaughter of the heathen on the banks of the Lippe; a second appearance in Burgundy, where faction had once more raised its head;—these were the labours which occupied the later years of the hero's life. Meanwhile those important events had occurred beyond the Alps, which, as we have elsewhere related, introduced the Carlovingians into the turmoil of

A.D. 734.

A.D. 735.

A.D. 737.

A.D. 739.

Italian politics. It was in 739, just after the settlement of the Burgundian troubles, that Gregory III. applied for aid against the Lombards, to "his most excellent son the sub-king (Sub-regulo) Carl."* The complaints of the pontiff were very bitter. His enemies, he said, had robbed the very church of St. Peter of its candlesticks, and carried off the pious offerings of Frank kings. Carl, as we have seen, had ample reason to hesitate. The reproaches of his spiritual father became more piteous and energetic. History never exactly reproduces itself, yet it requires no great stretch of imagination to transfer the ancient correspondence to our own times. Something very like it has surely passed between the Vatican and the Tuileries. "Oh, how incurable is the grief of our heart at these insults, when the sons of the Church, such, and so great as they are, make no effort to defend their spiritual mother."† Carl would not venture further than mediation. He succeeded in effecting a temporary agreement between the opposing parties, which, like most agreements on Italian matters, seems to have been observed by nobody. Next year, the Lombards were again at the gates of Rome, and the ruler of Rome adopted the *ultima ratio* of the Catholic Church,—the desperate expedient of sending the keys of St. Peter's sepulchre, and proffering the office of Patrician, to the "barbarian" mayor of the Franks. This meant nothing less than entire submission, political and ecclesiastical; for the symbolic action was an acknowledgment of Carl's authority as protector of the Church, and the transference of the title was a renunciation of allegiance for the future to the Byzantine emperors. The great Carlovingian accepted the symbolic offerings at the hands of the ambassadors, and returned the compliment by presents of commensurate magnificence. He did more; for he

A.D. 739.

A.D. 740.

* Fred. Chron. ex Annal. R. 741.

† See original, quoted by Perry, Franks, ch. v.

exerted his influence with Luitprand in favour of the Roman see. Had he lived, he might have anticipated the policy and actions of Pepin and Charlemagne; but the web of his eventful life was spun: he died, worn out by bodily and mental toil, at the early age of fifty, October 15th, A.D. 741. A.D. 741.

The Catholic Church, irritated by his confiscations of ecclesiastical property in districts which had risen in rebellion against his authority, has shown its gratitude for his great services, by consigning him to the lowest pit of Tophet. The same worthy bishop who beheld him there, and the abbot of St. Denis, allowed their curiosity, or their hatred, to violate the hero's tomb. They were rewarded for their pains. The body had disappeared; but the coffin was blackened by the action of fire inside, and, to their infinite dismay, a terrible dragon issued forth, and made his escape into the air! But the selfish animosity of churchmen who had a prospective interest in blackening the character of one whom they accused of sacrilege, ought not to detract from the glory of a great name. When we consider his perils from domestic traitor and foreign foe; the bitter opposition he encountered from turbulent seigneurs and intriguing churchmen; the difficulties of acquiring, in that rude age, the appliances of empire or the means of bringing to a successful issue either policy or war; the plans he elaborated, the distances he traversed, the enemies he encountered, the friends he conciliated, aided, or controlled; the terrible antagonism of Saxon in the North, and Saracen in the South, which he bore down by the force of his genius and his arms; above all, when we remember the deliverance which he wrought for Christendom in the hour of her utmost need,—Charles Martel stands forth as one of the greatest men of history; and we must admit the justice of the remark, that "had a Cæsar or a Livy unfolded his character and described his exploits, instead of a poor pedantic

monk like Fredegard, a rival might have been found for the Cæsars, the Scipios, and the Hannibals of old Rome."* Charles had already, before his death, divided his dominions among his sons. He has been blamed for the impolicy of the act. Most probably it was unavoidable. Neither his ancestors nor his successors were able to avoid the same necessity; and we have already seen the disasters entailed upon the family of Genseric by an attempt to supersede the ordinary principles of Teutonic succession.† Carloman, the elder son, had the German provinces—Austrasia, Alemannia, or Suabia, as it now began to be called, and Thuringia. To Pepin were allotted Neustria, Burgundy, and Provence. A third son, Gripho, the child of a beautiful and favourite wife, was, at the last moment, enriched with a kingdom subtracted from the inheritance of his brothers. As might have been expected, he immediately disappeared from the scene. The two others, for a brief period, maintained a community of interest and action. They found the time was not even yet ripe for clearing away the mummery of a Merovingian dynasty, and its accompanying pageant, which we have seen graphically described by Eginhard, so tenacious is the barbaric, or, perhaps, we may say universally, the vulgar mind, of any practice which tradition has invested with the character of a right.

Accordingly, they placed upon the throne which their father had been strong enough to leave unoccupied, one more long-haired Fainéant, Childeric III., and under the shadow of his name, betook themselves to the chastisement of their enemies, who, now that the heavy hand of the Hammer was withdrawn, swarmed around them, as fierce, as unmanageable as ever. It is not within the compass of a work which only treats of the cardinal events of history, and their general influence upon the condition of the modern world, to recount their sanguinary wars with Saxons, Bava-

* Perry, Franks, ch. v. † Lecture VII.

rians, Suabians, Burgundians, and the inhabitants of Aquitaine, assisted by their Vascon or Gascon allies. But the last-mentioned struggle, a prolonged and destructive one, deserves our especial attention, inasmuch as it resulted in the final trampling out of the ashes of that fire which smouldered in the once mighty power of Rome in Gaul. In Aquitaine, the Roman language, Roman habits, Roman institutions, still lingered after the North had been almost altogether Teutonized. But in the long and sanguinary conflict which Harold and Guaifer, dukes of Aquitaine, maintained with the sons of Charles Martel, these were utterly extinguished as elements of national or political power, though, of course, their civilizing influence passed largely into the constitution of mediæval and modern France. The war, which lasted for nine years, was signalized by frightful ravages and destruction of life upon both sides, until, at last, the Franks became masters of Berri, Auvergne, and the Limousin, with their principal cities. The able and gallant Guaifer was assassinated by his own subjects, and Pepin had the satisfaction of finally uniting the grand-duchy of Aquitaine to the monarchy of the Franks. But in the mean time, an event had occurred, which contributed, in no small degree, to the consolidation and aggrandisement of his power. Carloman, his elder brother, exasperated by the perpetual turbulence and opposition of the Suabians—the ancient Alemanni, —determined to annihilate the strength of these formidable vassals. He summoned the Suabian contingent, under Theobald their duke, to join him, in obedience to the military ban. Upon their arrival, he caused his Franks to seize and bind the unsuspecting soldiery, and when he had them in his power, he "mercifully corrected" (*misericorditer correxit*) his leading opponents, with, probably, a large number of their followers,—which, being interpreted into modern language, means that he put them all to the sword.

Remorse at the act, brought about, we may well believe and hope, by the remonstrances of his spiritual adviser, the virtuous Boniface, induced him, it is said, to abdicate his throne, and shut himself up in a Benedictine monastery, on the classic summit of Mount Soracte. Perhaps a conscious inferiority to his aspiring and energetic brother, coupled with a suspicion that the towering genius of Pepin would not long remain satisfied with a divided dominion, and a recollection of the fate of those among his predecessors who had unsuccesfully defended their thrones, exercised some considerable influence upon his decision. Be this as it may, Pepin, by this act of his brother, became sole mayor, that is to say, sole sovereign of the Franks, just at the very crisis of affairs, which necessarily forced him into a prominent position in the politics of the world.

We have, in the previous lecture, recounted the situation of Italy. The Lombard pressure weighed intolerably upon the Roman pontiffs. They had hoped to shake it off by the aid of Charles Martel; but in this hope they had been disappointed. With his son, for many reasons, they anticipated more success. He was, from policy, perhaps from natural inclination, more favourably disposed towards the Church. He was strongly and laudably influenced by the commanding mind, the stainless life, and the immense missionary success of St. Boniface, the great apostle of the mediæval gentiles. His father's unfortunate quarrel with the Church had been arranged by the synod of Lestines, near Cambrai, wherein the bishops consented to make a voluntary surrender of a portion of their funds, on condition that the civil rulers would, for the future, abstain from interference with ecclesiastical property and discipline. And moreover, Pepin's admission to the mayoralty had been undisputed: it was accompanied with the prestige which hereditary transmission conveys: he was no longer a simple servant or officer of the crown, but the regular successor to an established

dignity, and an independent power in the state; the army was entirely under his control, and this army was not now a mere band of freebooters or mercenaries, loosely held together by the ties of interest; but a constitutional force, well organized and well trained. The great Merovingian counterfeit was nearly at end, and the Carlovingian mayor, despite of the still remaining popular superstition, might venture to act more boldly than his predecessors. The relations between the Frank and Lombard had become less friendly, and more antagonistic than heretofore; former alliances between the parties had been forgotten; the Saracens were in no condition to render a new one necessary: it became evident to all thoughtful men, that victory and empire would follow the banners which should attach to themselves, by fair means or foul, the blessing of the head of the Christian Church, and the prestige of the imperial name of Rome. Such being the causes for more cordial relations between Carlovingians and the Church, it is not surprising that they speedily developed into important results. Pepin, on his part, agreed to the famous Act of Secularization, in which, under the influence and dictation of Boniface, a compromise was effected between the claims of the civil and the religious societies, and their relations established upon a more satisfactory footing. It was agreed at the synod of Saltz and Lestines, that the ecclesiastics should renounce many of the practices which gave a secular aspect to their lives; that they should abandon war, the pursuits of the chase, concubinage, and the wearing of arms; that the rule of St. Benedict should be revived, and that the synods of the clergy should be annually held. On the other hand, property taken from churches and religious houses was to be restored; and the strength of the secular arm was to be at the command of the bishop, for putting down all heathen superstition and practices, many of which still lingered in remote

A.D. 742.

A.D. 743.

districts. The financial question was, as always, more difficult of settlement. It was, however, enacted that Carloman and Pepin, in consideration of impending wars and persecution from neighbouring nations, should be allowed, by the indulgence of God, to retain for some time (*sub precario et censu*) a portion of the Church's property, for the support of an army, on these conditions:—that a *solidus* (a gold piece, worth twelve *denarii*) shall be paid annually to the church, or monastery, for every estate, and that the Church be reinvested with its property at the death of the then existing holder. "Should, however, necessity compel, or the prince ordain it, the precarium, or life-interest (*i. e.*, grant to a layman for life), must be renewed, and a new document drawn up; and, in every case, care must be taken that the churches and monasteries, the property of which is *in precario*, suffer no want or poverty. If honesty render it necessary, the whole property must be restored to the Church, or house of God."* The document is a very remarkable one. It is often quoted as proving the inviolability of all church property. So, indeed, to a certain extent, it does. Yet the provision, "*should necessity compel, or the prince ordain*," probably reduced its practical value as much in the hands of a Carlovingian as it would in those of a Tudor king. Pepin, however, fortified by what he felt to be his more favourable and secure position in reference to the Church, ventured, at last, upon the step which must have been long present to his mind,—perhaps to the mind of his predecessors,—the actual dethronement of the last member of the Merovingian dynasty, and the substitution of himself and his family in their place. But the origin of the Merovingian claims was hid in an obscure antiquity; no man might say when the first long-haired warrior of their race was raised upon the buckler, and made leader of the armies of the Franks. The

* Sismondi, Concil. Gall. tom. i. p. 540, Paris, 1629; quoted by Perry, ch. vi.

reverence of a rude age had gathered strength through the prescription of two hundred years, and it was not easy to obliterate the notion of "a divine right," which, in human memory, had never been questioned, or set aside. The Carlovingians, on the contrary, were but adventurers,—successful and able adventurers, it is true, but elevated above the members of their own class, by no more mysterious attributes than the clear brain and the strong hand which made them leaders alike in council and in war. It became necessary, therefore, to devise, and to obtain, a sanction which, by its awful character, might supply the place of the almost religious awe with which the multitude still regarded the race of Clovis.

There was but one power from which such a sanction could be derived,—the power which claimed, by divine commission, the right to bind and loose on earth, and to hold the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. The dreadful award of him whom men believed to be the successor of Peter and the representative of the Son of God, had already acquired a mightier influence in the arbitrament of thrones, than the voice of popular tradition, or the remembrance of rights whose origin was lost in the mythic shadows which enveloped the cradle of the national life. To Rome, therefore, Pepin turned for a sanction which might counterbalance the superstitious loyalty so long displayed towards the Merovingian kings. In the year 750, an embassy, composed of Pepin's own chaplain, the bishop of Wurzburg, and the abbot of St. Denis, crossed the Alps, and appearing at the papal court, laid the all-significant question before the new disposer of the kingdoms of the world,—"Should he who exercises no real authority in the land, retain the name of king? Or ought the name to be transferred to him who possesses the substance of royal power?" Pope Zachary, of course, had been previously informed of the application, and was prepared with his

A.D. 750.

answer. Zachary, says the annalist, in virtue of his apostolic authority (*secundum auctoritatem apostolicam*), answered, "that he considered it better, and more expedient, that *he* should be styled king, and *be* king, who possessed power in the realm, than he who was falsely called king."* Such seem to have been the exact terms of this celebrated decision, the morality of which was surely as equivocal as its expediency for both parties was patent.

Little time was lost, upon the receipt of this response, or, as the Carlovingian partisans called it, this apostolic command. By a grand council assembled at Soissons, Pepin was proclaimed king of the Franks, and received the holy oil of consecration, with his wife Bertrada, from the hands of the illustrious Boniface. This famous coronation has furnished the precedent and model adopted in after-ages by the sovereigns of Europe; and it is something more than singular, that a ceremony, the symbolism of which has been supposed to intimate the divine right of kings, should have been invented and inaugurated by the Church, to sanction the claims of a manifest usurper. Not a voice was raised, not a sword was drawn, for the last remaining scion of the race of Clovis; all went smoothly on for a time. Pepin, "king of the Franks by the grace of God," for such was the title he bore, ascended the throne without opposition from the Church or the nation. The first had begun to learn obedience to the Vicar of Christ; the second participated in that obedience, and attached itself to the strong arm, in which alone they trusted to drive the Saxon across the Rhine and the Saracen beyond the Pyrenees. But it was not for nothing, it was not without the hope of a valuable consideration, that the Church had compromised the rigour of her principles, and adopted the stout Carlovingian as her eldest son. The relations between the Lombards and the

* Annal. Laurissensis et Einhardi, an. 750; quoted by Perry, ch. vi.

Roman pontiffs have been elsewhere described. We shall not dilate upon them again, but their brief recapitulation is necessary for a correct understanding of French as of Italian history. Zachary died in 752, without reaping the fruits of his politic recognition of Pepin. He must have closed his eyes in despair, for the Lombard was thundering at the gates of Rome. His successor, Stephen II., appeased the enemy for a time; but it was only for a time. Again Astolphus appeared before the walls, "this time," says the chronicler, "like a raging and roaring lion," threatening to slay them all.

A.D. 752.

A.D. 753.

Stephen was in despair for "the fold which had been intrusted to him," *i. e.* Rome; "and the lost sheep," *i. e.* the towns in the exarchate of Ravenna.* How uniform are the traditions of the Vatican and the complaints of its master! He accordingly started upon his famous journey across the Great St. Bernard, in company with many civil and ecclesiastical dignitaries of Rome. We may remember his remonstrance with the Lombard king at Pavia, and his piteous applications to Pepin for assistance.† During the delay which elapsed before the Frank monarch could or would stir in his behalf, Stephen resided at the monastery of St. Denis, and was induced to repeat, with his own hands, the ceremony of coronation. The spectacle of the head of the Church dwelling in familiar intercourse with the king of the nation, and the prestige derived from the imposition of his sacred hands in the capital of the realm, upon the occupant and the heirs to the throne, produced so powerful an influence on the public mind, that it has perhaps perpetuated its effect to modern times, and rendered the presence of a pope in Paris, and the reception of the holy oil at the altar of Notre Dame, a cherished object of ambition with the

* Vita S. Stephani II.; quoted by Perry, Franks, ch. vi.

† See Lecture VI. p. 330.

rulers of the French people. It was upon the occasion of this second coronation, and not as has sometimes been erroneously supposed, at the first, that Stephen solemnly required of the Franks a pledge that, throughout all future ages, neither they, nor their posterity, should ever presume to appoint a king over themselves, except from the family of Pepin. The title of Patrician was once more solemnly conferred upon the king by the pontiff, who most probably was acting simply upon his own authority in the matter, and consequently implying a transference of allegiance on behalf of himself and of the Romans, from the court of Constantinople, to the Sun of Empire newly rising beyond the Rhine. We are already acquainted with the subsequent course of events; how Pepin, at the earnest solicitation of the pontiff and Peter, twice invaded Italy in the interests of the Church, and bestowed upon "the blessed Peter, and the Commonwealth of the Romans," the territory which was occupied by the Lombards, and owned by the emperors of the East. This is a subject interesting at all times, eminently interesting at the present, for it is the pivot upon which turns the future of Italy—the future, perhaps, of the Christian world. The real rights of the Roman see to temporal dominion rest upon its judicious bargain with Pepin-le-Bref; for the dotation of Constantine is a fable not now asserted by the Catholic historians themselves. Among all the confusion in which the subject is, it may be feared, intentionally involved, it is well to remember that even the patrimony of Peter never belonged to his self-determined successors, until Peter had been sleeping for nearly seven centuries in the tomb.

A.D. 754.

The latter part of Pepin's life was occupied in that struggle with Aquitaine, to which we have already had occasion to refer. It commenced, or rather recommenced, in 760, and lasted for eight years. The chroniclers of the time record the wide-spread and

A.D. 760.

merciless rapine which devastated the centre and south of France, the burning of Tours, the plunder of churches and monasteries, the destruction of all agricultural produce, green vines and growing corn. It is a curious feature of the times, that the expeditions in which these frightful evils were consummated, are described as having taken place "under the guidance of Christ, and by the aid of God." Their professed object, however, was to enforce upon Guaifer the restoration of lands alienated from the Church, and of immunities originally enjoyed by the estates of clerical persons. Guaifer made a stout defence; he was even aided by treachery and defalcation in the Carlovingian camp. But all was in vain.

Pepin, exasperated, but not exhausted by this obstinate resistance, turned his whole mind, says the chronicler, to the destruction of Guaifer, and determined never to rest till he had taken prisoner or killed the rebel.* Even his fierce spirit must have been satisfied. He hung his enemy's uncle, captured and imprisoned his mother, sister, and niece, and chased Guaifer himself like a wild wolf of the Pyrenees, from one lurking-place to another, till he was finally murdered by his own followers in the forest of Perigord. With the fall of its last leader, fell Aquitaine itself, and with it was extinguished for ever the possible predominance of the Romanic spirit and character in modern France: it remained as an influence; as a power it had passed away. A.D. 768.

It was not long before Pepin succumbed to the only conqueror of his race: he died on the 24th September, 768, and was buried in that mighty sepulchre of kings, the abbey church of St. Denis. To his character and career we cannot refuse the tribute of our admiration. Between the towering proportions of his father and his son, the A.D. 768.

* Annal. Einhard. anno 768.

victor of Tours and the first emperor of the West, the historic stature of Pepin himself is dwarfed beneath its due proportions In war he was brave, resolute, skilful, and almost universally triumphant against the barbarians of Germany, the rival dynasties of Gaul, the far-famed Lombard conquerors of Italy, and the formidable warriors of another world and creed. His personal courage was extraordinary. Once, when a terrific struggle between a lion and a bull was taking place in his presence, "Who will dare separate them?" he asked. The bystanders quailed, as well they might. Pepin sprang into the arena, and striking off the heads of both animals with his massive sword, presented them to the astonished courtiers, exclaiming, "Am I not worthy to be your king?" In peace — such peace as those troublous times afforded—he pursued a far-seeing and widely-reaching policy, distinguished by a patient waiting upon opportunity, very rare in a period of passionate impulses and precipitate action. In his relations with the ecclesiastical power he was eminently successful. Eldest son of the Church, he retained the affection of his parent, though occasionally compelled to inflict some rude blows upon her authority and temporal interests. But the gift of the Exarchate, so transcendant in its importance and its consequences, entirely obliterated all minor causes of quarrel or complaint, and Pepin, in the admiring language of the contemporary ecclesiastics, is always, even in his most equivocal exploits, "the pious, valorous, and triumphant" son and champion of the Church. Whether such language be wilful misrepresentation, or the result of a strange unconscious obliquity of the moral judgment, it is equally characteristic of the age. The Church of the Merovingian era was endowed with many high qualities: it had sprung, at no distant period, from the blood of martyrs; it was active and eminently useful; it contained many men of holy lives; but, like all societies composed of human agents, it was not proof against the peculiar

temptations of the times. They are not the temptations of our times: we can easily resist them, and are prone to think hardly of those who succumbed to what we can easily resist. But the converse may also be true. It is possible that Merovingian churchmen were strong where we should be found weak, and that the balance is more even between us than we suspect. The inference is not obscure. It is idle to dream of any past period of Utopian perfection in the Christian Church: it is equally idle to judge harshly any period, past, present, or to come, for not realizing an almost immaculate ideal. In respect to the great question of human progress, the only right method to form a judgment is to compare the special evils of the separate eras, and to determine, so far as we may, which are most contrary to the spirit of the Gospel, and are apparently least accessible to its healing and purifying influences. On these principles, need the nineteenth century fear comparison with the ninth?

But it is time to turn our thoughts to the illustrious successor of Pepin. His reign forms the first great era in the post-Christian world: it is a solemn pause in the order of human history; the gathering up for a moment into a visible unity, of all the moral, social, and intellectual phenomena elaborated for our struggling and suffering race by "the process of the suns." Such a theme demands a chapter to itself.

LECTURE IX.

CHARLEMAGNE.

"Les éléments de la civilisation confondus, mêlés au sein de la barbarie, trouvèrent sous cette forte main un équilibre momentané. Il est le point d'union de temps modernes et de l'antiquité; il finit le monde barbare, et du démembrement de son empire va naître le monde féodale."—BARCHOU DE PENHOËN, *Philosophie de l'Histoire.*

"L'empire se maintint par la grandeur du chef: le prince était grand, l'homme l'était davantage."—MONTESQUIEU, *Esprit des Lois.*

"Tale era Carlo, e nel personale suo carattere, forse più che in altro, consiste il segreto della tanta efficacia che esercitò sui contemporanei." —CANTÙ, *Storia Universale.*

SYNOPSIS.—CHARLEMAGNE. I. His conquests and foreign relations; with the Germans; with the Avars; with the Lombards and Greeks in Italy; with the Saracens: miscellaneous: their territorial results; communications with the East.—II. His domestic policy and arrangements; fields of May; the Capitularies; Missi Dominici; Beneficia; his patronage of the Church and Letters.—III. His legendary history and personal attributes; reasons why legend predominates over history; his character and the office of his Empire in respect of the new civilization.

PEPIN, before his death, in obedience to the usual Frank custom, had partitioned his empire between his two sons, Charles and Carloman. Modern writers loudly blame the policy of adhering to such a precedent. Most probably departure from it would have been impossible. But in this case, the division of force was practically of little importance. The superior vigour and ability of Charles rapidly asserted itself. His brother was compelled to cede a portion of territory, concerning which a dispute had arisen, and was saved, by a premature death, from what might have been a long,

but would certainly, also, have been a hopeless struggle, against the greatest genius for war and policy which the world had known, or was to know, until a thousand years had elapsed.

The immense amount of matter, the many subjects for speculation and argument, the various estimates of actions, motives, and character, which the reign of Charlemagne discloses to the historic student, render the satisfactory treatment of such a subject, even within the limits of an entire lecture, a most hopeless task. It may well be believed that, in the few pages which follow, I have no such ambitious design. Happily, the period of history connected with this great man is more generally studied, and less imperfectly understood, than those which precede and follow it. Where knowledge is more common, or, rather, we should say, where ignorance is less universal, our object, which is to awaken interest, to suggest inquiry, or recall information which has passed away from the memory, may be prosecuted with greater brevity. Perhaps, therefore, if we briefly regard the great reviver of imperialism in respect of his conquests and foreign relations, in his domestic policy and legislation, and his personal character and attributes, we may be regarded as having sufficiently discharged the duty which we have undertaken.

(I.) Like all the Carlovingians, Charles succeeded to a turbulent realm and disputed authority. But the sword of Charles Martel and of Pepin had fallen so heavily upon both domestic and foreign foe, that their descendant grasped the sceptre under far more fortunate auspices than his sires. He inherited the prestige of their victories, the actual material strength of their armies, and the happy results of their politic relations with the Church. Still, through all his long reign, he was continually engaged in battle. From the year of his accession, 769 A.D., to that which immediately preceded his decease,

A.D. 769.

813 A.D., the curious have computed at least fifty-three separate expeditions in which he was personally engaged. These I cannot, of course, recount; but they admit of an easy classification, which will explain their character to the student, and enable him to retain them in his memory.

(1.) First, in respect of duration, importance, and severity, come his wars with the barbarians of Germany, among whom the Saxons and Bavarians occupy the chief place. To humble those fierce and pagan foes, was his first care upon coming to the throne; it formed the last employment of his life. Throughout the whole intervening period, their animosity prevented the prosecution of more inviting conquests, and disturbed the rare intervals of peace. Much has been said and written in condemnation of these wars, their exterminating fury, the oceans of blood which they caused to flow, the waste of treasure which they occasioned, the loss of splendid opportunities for more useful, and, probably, more permanent acquisitions in Spain and Italy, the sanguinary proselytism which is said to have accompanied them, and the injury inflicted by it upon the cause and character of Christianity. These, and other objections, have been strongly urged against the wisdom of that policy which fixed the seat of empire mainly at Aachen or Ingelheim, and directed the power and resources of the empire to the Elbe and the Oder, rather than to those two great Mediterranean peninsulas which offered so much more splendid a prize to the ambition of this new successor of the Cæsars.

Charlemagne, we may be confident, was wanting neither in the desire to re-habilitate the imperial idea in the south of Europe, nor in the capacity to discern the best means of carrying out his object. But he had not forgotten the past. There was an example of marvellous significance before his eyes, and he was not the man to neglect or misunderstand it. He felt that if he did not succeed in destroying the barbarians, they would destroy him. It was not with him

as it is with us,—as it was with the European rulers a few centuries afterwards, whose thrones were, perhaps, rendered possibilities only by the sweep of his unpausing, unrelenting sword. In the eighth century, the islands and forests of the North still teemed with those warlike and prolific races which had devoured the Roman empire. Charlemagne believed that they would be fatal to his own, if, after the example of his Italian predecessors, he permitted them to grow and gather volume, strength, and weight, until they descended a living avalanche upon the country west of the Rhine, as their fathers descended of old upon the plains of Cisalpine Gaul. For this purpose, he devoted his best energies to the task of breaking up their federations at the very time of their birth, and as near as possible to the place of their formation. It is his glory that he succeeded. The great Carlovingian empire of the ninth century broke the power of Barbarism. It has never reappeared in its ancient aspect; it has never burst upon Europe with the same tremendous capacity for destruction, as in the days when Alaric, Attila, and Genseric wielded its resources, and civilization seemed about to sink before the Goth, the Vandal, or the Hun. One exception may be taken to this statement. When Charlemagne had disappeared from the scene, and his sword no longer guarded the wide circuit of dominion which had once owned his supremacy, the Norman Vikings swept the seas. They made themselves masters of some of the fairest and most fertile parts of Europe. But the fact recalls the well-known anecdote of the aged emperor, who once, near the close of his life, was moved, even to tears, at the sight of these piratical banners approaching the port of Narbonne. His prescient mind foresaw the misery which they would one day cause to his people; perhaps, also, other apprehensions of anarchy and evil mingled with the melancholy foreboding. But the circumstance indicates, not obscurely, the dominant idea of his mind, and the secret of

his policy. It justifies the belief that in his German wars he considered himself as the champion of the new civilization against the same enemy as had overthrown the old. With regard to the moral and religious character of these wars, no one would willingly extenuate a method of propagandism which places Christianity upon the same level as the faith of Mohammed, and offers to the vanquished no other alternative than "Belief, or Death." Yet there can be no doubt that, in proclaiming internecine war against the Heathenism of his foes, Charlemagne touched the very point wherein lay their hopeless antagonism to himself and to his empire; and as Sir J. Stephen has remarked, he did not propose to them the terrible choice, "Submit, or die," until they had stubbornly and ferociously rejected the milder terms,—"Be quiet, and live."

(2.) These ceaseless contests with the Teutons of Germany brought Charlemagne into contact with an outer circle of Barbarism, with tribes of Slavic and Turanian blood, who now appear for the first time on the horizon of modern European politics. His campaigns against wild Slavonians and still wilder Avars, have mainly that interest which they borrow from the incidents of after-ages; such as those to which our attention has been already directed by M. Thierry.* But on his relations with the Avars we must briefly dwell, as they form the necessary complememt of a subject to which we have promised to recur. Tassilon, duke of Bavaria, an ambitious and unprincipled man, organized a conspiracy against the authority of Charlemagne. For this purpose he sought the aid of the Avars, who were, at that time, the strongest power lying between Italy, ever convulsed by Greek intrigue, and the great Saxon confederation, ever bitterly hostile to the new empire. The Avars were induced to join the league, influenced, most probably, by the hope of plunder. But Tassilon was not the leader to con

* See Lecture IV. p. 228.

tend successfully against such a master as Charlemagne. The web of his treasons was speedily unravelled, and having been summoned to Ingelheim, he was there tried by his peers, and condemned to death. Charles, moved by his abject entreaties, granted him life, but, after the custom of the times, consigned him to a convent. His Avar allies knew that the hour of retribution would soon arrive, and, crossing the Alps, attempted to form a junction with the Greek enemies of the Frank empire in Italy. But the Greeks never forced their way north of the Beneventan duchy, and the Avars were signally beaten by the Frank generals in the Venetian province and in Bavaria. Charles was now thoroughly incensed, and determined upon extirpating the Avars, "for their intolerable malice," says the chronicler, "against the people of Gaul and the churches of God."* The determination was received with considerable excitement throughout the Gallic province; for men called to mind the sorceries and supernatural terrors which had dismayed the army of Sigebert, and the Avars, or Huns, as they were supposed to be, had left behind a terrible recollection of the time when they traversed Gaul in the train of Attila the Destroyer. Metz, Paris, Orleans, Troyes, Rheims, and Cologne, with a hundred other cities, recalled the sufferings of those calamitous days, and vaguely feared their repetition. But no dismay reached the mind of Charlemagne. After military preparations greater, say the chroniclers, than any which had preceded them, the emperor, accompanied by his wife and favourite son, the young Louis of Aquitaine, arrived, with a formidable army, at Ratisbon, on the Danube. His plan for the ensuing campaign presents a remarkable similarity, says M. Thierry, to Napoleon's plan for the famous campaign of Austerlitz. Master of both Italy and Bavaria, he assumed two distinct bases of operation, one on the upper Danube, the other on the Po.

A.D. 788.

* Chron. S. Arnulph, ann 791, apud Thierry.

His own army, following the valley of the Danube, was to assail the Avars in the front, while the second army, under Pepin, "king of Italy," was to debouch from the passes of the Alps, and take the enemy in the flank by the valleys of the Save and Drave. In the mean time, the Avars had retired behind their very singular defences,—the Hrings, or Rings, of which we have already spoken. M. Thierry has given us an interesting account of them, drawn from the obscure description of the monk of St. Gall, who wrote a life of Charlemagne.* They seem to have been a series of eight or nine gigantic ramparts, constructed in concentric circles, the inner one of all being called the royal circle or camp, where was deposited all the valuable plunder which the warriors had collected in their expeditions. The method of constructing these ramparts was somewhat singular. Two parallel rows of gigantic piles were driven into the ground, some twenty feet apart. The intervening space was filled with stones, or a species of chalk, so compacted as to become a solid mass. The sides and summit were covered with soil, upon which were planted trees and shrubs, whose interlacing branches formed an impenetrable hedge. Upon the whole, the Hring must have presented very much the appearance of an old railway embankment, overgrown with

* M. Thierry describes the Avar method of fortification as "un système étrange, qui ne ressemble à aucun autre." It at any rate resembles the account given by Herodotus of the fortification of Ecbatana, and strongly recalls to our mind the Oriental origin of the Avar and Hunnic tribes:—

"The Medes were again obedient, and built the city now called Agbatana, the walls of which are of great size and strength, rising in circles one within the other. The plan of the place is, that each of the walls should outtop the one beyond it by the battlements. The nature of the ground, which is a gentle hill, favours this arrangement in some degree; but it was mainly effected by art. The number of the circles is seven, the royal palace and the treasuries standing within the last. The circuit of the outer wall is very nearly the same with that of Athens. Of this wall the battlements are white, of the next black, of the third scarlet, of the fourth blue, of the fifth orange: all these are coloured with paint. The two last have their battlements coated respectively with silver and gold."—RAWLINSON'S *Herodotus.*

wood. Communication between the several circles was of course maintained by gateways; so that when an outer Hring had been captured, all the occupants, with their herds and waggons, might retire into the next. A series of signals by sound of trumpet conveyed intelligence, with the utmost rapidity, from one circle to another,—an expedient which cannot but raise our estimate of the military organization and general intelligence of the people among whom it was brought to perfection. The extent of territory comprised within these circles, and their distance from each other, it is not easy to ascertain with accuracy. The monk of St. Gall describes the interval between one rampart and another, in a loose way, as equivalent to the distance between Constance and Zurich, which M. Thierry must certainly be wrong in estimating as "trente ou quarante milles *Germaniques.*" The same number of English miles would probably more correctly represent the distance. As, however, there is no certainty that the same space existed between all the Hrings, there is no possibility of calculating the whole superficies. The outer circle covered the town of Vienna, even then a place of some importance. It was on the height of the Kählenberg, so celebrated in after-time for the appearance of Sobieski the Deliverer, when Vienna was beleaguered by the Turks, that Charlemagne won his first great victory over their kindred. A second battle brought him as far as Raab, and his fleet, in the mean time, had captured a strongly-defended island in the Danube, where was found an immense quantity of cattle, corn, and the other agricultural stores which constituted the primitive wealth of the Huns. Pepin had descended from the Alps in the mean time, and was equally successful in the Sirmian peninsula, as it was called, lying between the Drave and the Save. There he captured an inner Hring, and an amount of booty which, to the Franks, seemed boundless. But the season was now far advanced; Charlemagne was too good a general

A.D. 791.

to expose his troops to the perils of a winter campaign, in a land of inundations and morasses; an epidemic, moreover, of great violence, had attacked the horses and cattle; and consequently the Frank armies were, with great prudence, withdrawn before Christmas.

This expedition had almost assumed the character of a crusade, for the emperor and his leading warriors deemed it a sacred duty to extirpate the remains of paganism in Europe, and in this particular case they imagined themselves chosen instruments in the hand of Providence to avenge the wrongs which Christendom had endured from the "Scourge of God." But other ideas suggested themselves to the politic brain of the ruler of the West, when he found himself upon the frontiers of the Greek empire, and perceived the beauty and value of its possessions, their undefended state, and the decrepitude of the Byzantine court. There can be little doubt but that speculations of this sort induced him to persist in the effort thus successfully commenced, and under plea of this Avar war, to push onward his victorious standards nearer to the banks of the Bosphorus. The design which he is known to have entertained, indeed, to have attempted, of connecting the Rhine and the Danube by a canal, most probably formed part of a large and politic scheme for furthering the same object. The Greeks were thoroughly alarmed, and endeavoured, too successfully, to excite, by their usual arts, the Saxons and the Avars against the man whose name was by this time whispered, in tones of apprehension, in every city of the East. The Saxons and the Avars were thus induced to unite in one great effort, which they themselves hoped would free Germany from the presence of the Franks, and which the Greeks were assured would at any rate check their advance upon Constantinople. But Charlemagne had learnt the method of dealing with his enemy. The plan of the previous campaign was repeated; the duke of Friuli, at the head of a Frank army, captured

one of the inner circles; but for the young king Pepin was reserved the glory of carrying by storm the royal Hring itself, which was situated on the banks of the Theiss, near the very spot where once stood the palace of Attila. Pepin, says M. Thierry, never arrested his steps until he had placed his foot within the sanctuary of the Avar nationality, and until the standard of the Protector of the Church floated above the ancient dwelling of the "Scourge of God." "The entry of Pepin," he adds, "into Aix-la-Chapelle presented an image of the triumphs of that ancient Roman empire, of the resuscitation of which Charlemagne was dreaming with such ardour. Before the triumphing monarch defiled the captured standards, the spoils of the vanquished chiefs arranged as trophies, and a long line of open chariots containing the treasures of the Avar kings; heaps of gold and silver coin, precious stones of all kinds, golden tissues, and silk, purple, and precious vases torn from palaces or churches, the costly value and workmanship of which proved them to have formed part of the plunder of Greece, Italy, and Gaul. Tudun and the Avar nobles, in humble and dejected attitudes, formed part of the *cortége*. It was not clear whether they appeared in the capacity of allies or captives. Tudun kneeling before Charlemagne, swore fidelity according to the Frankish ceremonial, and expressed a desire to receive the sacred rite of baptism."* This may well close our account of the relations between Charlemagne and the Avars, though their final extermination was the work of a future campaign. A somewhat curious use was made of the treasures discovered in the Avar camp. Charlemagne, with true royal magnificence, bestowed them upon the great churches of the realm,—especially the cathedral of Mayence,—upon the Pope, and contemporary Christian princes. Among these was Offa, the Saxon king of Mercia. William of Malmsbury records the language of the imperial message which accom-

* Histoire d'Attila et ses Successeurs, vol. ii. p. 182.

panied the gift. "Of the secular treasure which the Lord Jesus, in his unmerited goodness, has placed in our hands, we have distributed a portion among our metropolitan cities. To you we send, in token of our love, a baldric, a Hunnish sword, and two mantles of silk."*

(3.) The wars beyond the Alps possess still greater interest, but they exhibit a very different character: they were waged against an antagonist who once might have been a rival, and even a successful rival, to the Frank monarchy. The Lombard has been styled the noblest of all the barbarians, and we have seen that he had no mean claim to the title. He had the advantage over the Frank of an earlier appearance upon the stage of the confused struggle for the spoils of the Roman empire; his armies were better trained, better armed, more skilfully led; the Alps protected his strategic position from external assault, more effectually than the Rhine protected his rival; above all, he was nearer to the great central seat, the home and the heart of the imperial power. Rome lay almost within his grasp. Had he rendered himself master of Rome, by the judicious employment of force or policy, he would have succeeded, as the Frank afterwards did, to the prestige of her name and the weight of her authority. But we have already described the causes which neutralized these favourable conditions. These were, the small numbers of the conquering race; the existence of a large native population ever ready to conspire against their rule; the insuperable jealousy, turbulence, and strife of the great feudal chiefs (the anachronism is pardonable, for reasons already given);† the consequent impossibility of a strong centralized government; the implacable hatred, and vehement opposition of the Roman pontiffs, who were offended by the Arianism and alarmed by the rapacity of the invaders. Yet, after all, the Lombard kingdom was

* Guliel. Malms. Hist. Reg. Angl. i., *apud* Thierry.

† Lecture VI. p. 316.

strong enough in warlike renown, and in the material appliances of military power, to command the respect, perhaps to awaken the apprehensions, of Charlemagne. Hence his politic marriage with the daughter of Desiderius, which may have served as a temporary blind, while he was yet unsettled upon the throne, or a pretext for quarrel when he had consolidated his resources. I shall not again recount the events which followed, when this transparent mask of mutual amity had been cast aside, and the ever-memorable compact concluded between the Roman priest and the Carlovingian king. It will be sufficient to repeat that the Lombard war terminated in a success which was very moderately employed. All the dominions of his adversary, save the indomitable or inaccessible duchy of Benevento, fell into the hands of the victor. Annexation, however, rather than conquest, as it was then understood, appears to have been the object of Charlemagne. The Lombard dukes, who had by this time made their office hereditary, were not disturbed; the national laws were allowed to retain their validity; the general habits and customs of the people suffered little change; the municipal institutions, which had survived the Empire, survived also this second and ruder shock; and the conqueror appears to have been content with a titular sovereignty of Italy, vested in his eldest son. Thus did it come to pass, that, notwithstanding their submission to a foreign rule, the Lombards permanently impressed their name, and perhaps their national type, upon northern Italy.

One element in the condition of Italy with which Charlemagne had to deal, should by no means be forgotten —Greek intrigue in the peninsula; and this intrigue was now directed by a woman of bold and subtle genius—the empress Irene. More or less she involved the Saxons, the Avars, the Lombard kings themselves, and the Beneventan dukes, in the webs of her policy, and employed them against

the Franks, whom she perceived to hold the destiny of Italy in their hands. The inhabitants of the exarchate of Ravenna and of the Pentapolis, in their endeavours to assert independence, had only passed from the feeble grasp of the Greek into the strong hand of the Lombard. Still they were lost to the Byzantine empire; but the Byzantine empire yet retained some ground in the centre of the peninsula, and the rebel spirit of the Beneventan dukes inclined them to favour any intervention in Italian affairs which might damage the supremacy of their own legitimate kings. With such material to work upon, the intrigues of Irene were incessant, and must certainly be taken into account, when we are estimating the difficulties of Charlemagne beyond the Alps. We have already seen her excite the Avars against her rival, and abandon them in their peril. A still more signal instance of her animosity, and it must be added, of her impotence, was the assistance of a Byzantine fleet afforded to the young Adalgisius, son of the last Lombard king, who was endeavouring to recover his father's kingdom from the Franks. The attempt was an entire failure, and the fleet afforded no material assistance; but its presence was sufficient proof that the Greeks were ready to unite with their bitterest enemies against the establishment of Frank influence in Italy. "The proverbial cunning of the Greeks," observes M. Thierry, was never exhibited in a more subtle and menacing form than in the policy of Irene, who held the whole power of Charlemagne in check, by preventing its consolidation; keeping alive, as she did, among the Lombards, the spirit of nationality and vengeance, and among the fickle Italians, the vague hope of an improvement in their condition." *

(4.) In many respects the struggle with the Saracen excites, by its associations, more vivid and lasting interest than either the German or Italian wars. The cycle of Carlovingian romance has poured an affluence of song and

* Histoire d'Attila et ses Successeurs, vol. ii. p. 144.

legend around the memory of the great emperor, with his paladins and peers, which has completely overwhelmed and concealed the scantier records of authentic history. Bojardo, Ariosto, and numberless other bards less known to fame, long filled the listening ears of Europe with tales of wild adventure and gallant feats of arms, where bold knights and lovely ladies are continually entangled in the sorceries of the foul worshippers of "Mahoun and Termaganst," but only to win at last deliverance and a splendid revenge. Yet the acclaim of triumph is broken by the melancholy strains of the *chanson* of Roland, as it rises above the blood-stained ravine so fatal to France and to Christendom, when—

> "Roland the brave, and Olivier,
> And many a paladin and peer,
> At Roncesvalles died."

It is not indeed difficult to understand how the contest between the Franks and the Spanish Arabs assumed a greater prominence in the literature of that rude age, than the more formidable wars and bloodier battles fought beyond the Rhine. Whatever remained of intellectual culture, and the capacity to clothe in the grace of language the incidents of history, was to be found among the Romanized inhabitants of Aquitaine and southern Gaul. This was emphatically the case with the national poetry. The Trouvères of the Langue d'Oui, and more remotely their brethren, the Provençal Troubadours, were brought into direct contact with the strife against the Saracen unbeliever; and all the strongest instincts of religion, patriotism, and song, were kindled into a blaze by the collision. It fired the imagination of these children of a young and heroic age, to look forth from their dwellings upon the mighty chain of the Pyrenees, and feel that beyond that rocky barrier lay another world and people, associated in their minds with the most terrible perils, as well as the most glorious triumphs, of their country

and their faith. It is impossible even now to stand upon the summit of the mountain-ridge which separates Spain from France, without feeling somewhat of the old heroic sentiment to which the great cycle of Carlovingian romance gave an utterance at once passionate and picturesque. Before us, far as the eye can reach, to the banks of the winding Nivelle, lies a pleasant land of corn and vines, bright with the green and yellow lines which endear to its children the memory of "la belle France" in a foreign land. In the background, stretching far away towards the west, rise the stern sierras of Spain, whose iron aspect and serrated edges at once explain the origin of the name. On the right tower the gigantic masses of the Pyrenees, so unlike the rugged mountain-chains of Switzerland, yet possessing a grandeur of their own, softened by the rich foliage of the forests which clothe their sides, yet abounding in precipices, defiles, and paths among the clouds, more inaccessible than the Splügen or the Stelvio; while here and there, high above them all, some snow-capt pinnacle glitters in the southern sunshine like a silver star. To complete the picture; far below, on the left, roll the broad waters of the boundless Atlantic, for three thousand years the bourne of human ambitions and human passions, the barrier beyond which the tide of conquest, ever surging towards the west, had never passed. Amid such scenes was fought the fatal fight of Roncesval. Ten centuries have rolled away since that memorable day; mightier armies have swept through those blood-stained defiles; greater leaders have associated their names with rock, and river, and fiercely-contested pass; beneath the shadow of those hills the fate of empires has been decided by the sword; but the Basque peasant still sings of Roland and Charlemagne, and still the traveller seems to see the long line of white turbans and swarthy faces, winding slowly through the woods, and Arab spear-heads glittering in the pass. It is not surprising, then, that on such a theme, among

an imaginative race, legend should triumph over history; but there is also another cause which bestowed a disproportionate interest and importance upon the Spanish campaigns of Charlemagne. The religious exaltation, which in after-years found its expression in the crusades, was engendered and fostered in that frontier land where the two Religions stood face to face, and where there was no cessation, for century after century, in those bitter animosities and alarms from which the triumphant field of Tours had delivered northern Europe. The exasperation and enthusiasm which burst forth in the great square of Clermont, at the fiery preaching of Peter the Hermit, had long smouldered in the heart of soldier and priest and peasant, in the land that lay beneath the Pyrenees. Not seldom had it blazed forth fiercely in "razzia" and reprisal. No fanatic crusader, who stood in the breach at Ascalon or scaled the walls of Jerusalem, regarded himself more surely as the champion of the faith, and the chosen of God, than the Christian swordsman who fought the Saracen at Roussillon or Roncesval. From the eighth to the eleventh century, the Spanish Marches were to the chivalry of France what Syria and Palestine were to the steel-clad nobles who followed the banner of Philip Augustus or Cœur-de-Lion. And if the Carlovingian romance has outlived and superseded history, it is because, from the nature of the subject and the necessities of the case, it obtained a stronger hold on the affections and occupied a larger space in the minds of men.

Passing, however, to the actual condition of things which gave birth to these brilliant products of the imagination, we find that even the absorbing fanaticism which inspired the followers of Mohammed was not proof against the temptations of secular ambition and the evils arising from it. The Abassides reigned at Bagdad, the Ommiades governed Spain. As a necessary consequence, the Ommiad dynasty was perpetually harassed by the partisans of the opposite faction.

The whole country was in a state of turbulent agitation, when the aid of Charlemagne was invoked by a seditious leader against Abderaman, the lieutenant of the ruling caliph. The opportunity was not to be lost. Islamism might be driven beyond the Ebro; possibly also the northern paladins might revel in the orange-groves and gorgeous alcazars of Cordova and Seville. Two Frank armies were speedily across the Pyrenees. The rendezvous was Saragossa, for Saragossa was to be delivered by treachery into their hands. But this must be classed among the occasions when "treason never prospers," because, that is to say, it does not succeed. Saragossa, so far from opening her gates, stood a stout siege against the invaders, and anticipated her own history by a thousand years. Charlemagne, unable to make any impression upon the town, and harassed by the inhabitants of the province, who rose against the foreigner, withdrew his army, and marched northward, whither he was summoned by more important cares. As the rear-guard defiled through the pass of Roncesval, the people of the district, then called Vasconia, assisted, it is said, by the Saracens, closed in upon their ranks. The Vascones or Basques, who obeyed Duke Lupus II., son of the famous Guaifer, and descended from the Merovingian Caribert, had small affection for the Frank army or the Carlovingian house. They were eager for vengeance, and having previously occupied a narrow gorge in the mountains through which their enemies were compelled to pass, they showered down upon them rocks, trunks of trees, and missiles of all sorts. The result was a frightful disaster. The Frank division, forming the rear-guard of the army, was annihilated. Roland fell at the post of honour. Ever since he has been the darling hero of romance; and if

> "The blast of his dread horn
> On Fontarabian echoes borne,"

did not reach the ears of King Charles as he sat at Paris in

council with his peers, it has performed perhaps as great a marvel; it has echoed through song and legend for a thousand years, and still lingers in the imagination of the poet and the memory of the historical student.

(5.) The domestic wars of Charlemagne, as they may be called, were not of very grave importance. Through all that wide region which extends between the three seas and the Rhine, the two Pepins and Charles Martel had borne down opposition with a heavy hand. There still, however, remained two centres of resistance: Aquitaine, ever restless from its Roman reminiscences, and the Armorican peninsula, never perfectly subdued. The first had already felt so often and so terribly the weight of the Carlovingian sword, that Charlemagne was enabled to reduce it in a single expedition; nor does it appear that treason, as by this time it had begun to be called, ever troubled him again in Southern Gaul. The Bretons most probably offered a stouter resistance. If they ever yielded to Pepin, it was not with a complete or cheerful obedience. In a rugged land, amid storms and mists and waves, the old Celtic superstitions, kept alive by wild legends and the mysterious memorials of Druid worship, scattered through lonely glens and plains, had stamped a character upon the popular mind, which still lingers in the nineteenth century, but which, we may be sure, was vigorous and vivid in the eighth. It is little surprising, therefore, that the Bretons were ever ready for revolt, or that they united themselves for the purpose, as they are said to have done on this occasion, with the enemies of the Empire beyond the Rhine. But Charlemagne was not the man to be dismayed by any such combination. He speedily smote his foes with either hand, and disposing of all opposition in two successful inroads, extended an undisputed sway up to the base of the very rocks which receive the Atlantic surge.

A.D. 769.

(6.) Several miscellaneous and incidental conflicts fill up

the catalogue of the wars of Charlemagne. They may be briefly summed up as follows :—Against the Saracens, who had settled in Italy, Corsica, and Sardinia, five expeditions,—these were of course supplementary to his straggle with the Lombards for the possession of Italy ;—against the Danes three expeditions, — these were the natural corollary of the German war ;—against the Greeks of the Eastern empire, on the Adriatic coast, two expeditions.

A.D. 806—813.

A.D. 808—811.

A.D. 809—810.

The general territorial result of all these wars was an empire which equalled, if it did not surpass, the Roman empire of the West. From the Atlantic seaboard to the great eastern rivers of Germany, the Save and the Oder ; from the Danish peninsula to the limits of the duchy of Benevento and to the banks of the Ebro,—all civilized and semicivilized Europe obeyed the behests of the Austrasian Frank, who had made himself the successor of the Cæsars. Saxon kings from Briton, Saracen emirs from Spain, the Lombard dukes of Italy, the wild Slavonian chieftains from beyond the German border, flocked to Aix-la-Chapelle, and crowded the Carlovingian court with a more motley band of suitors than had ever presented themselves at the Palatine. But even these were not the most marked and important visitors who did homage to the new dynasty, and testified to the widespread influence of its name. The court of Constantinople recognized its rival by politic embassies, presents, and smooth words. It is not probable that much real disposition to a coalition of any sort lurked behind these courtesies. The proposal for a union between the two empires, by a marriage between Charlemagne and the reigning empress Irene, widow of Leo III., most probably emanated from the West. It bears the stamp of that comprehensive genius which had already revived the imperial traditions, and organized so vast a political unity from such

unpromising materials. That it was ever sincerely entertained at Constantinople, may be considered as more than doubtful. The Greek intellect, if incapable of prosecuting any exalted design for political regeneration and national glory, was still subtle enough to discern that the destinies of the East, already overshadowed by the power which had risen beside the Rhine, would suffer an entire and dismal eclipse, if the two should be brought into still closer collision. But perhaps Bagdad offered to Charlemagne some consolation for the repugnance of Byzantium. If Irene refused his hand, Haroun Alraschid, the ruling caliph of the Abasside dynasty, testified the warmth of his friendship by sending to Aix-la-Chapelle an ape, an elephant, aud a curious clock, which struck the hours. He is said to have proffered, also, the keys of the holy sepulchre, a gift which might, in after-ages, have spared whole oceans of blood. But I am inclined to believe that the story itself is the offspring of a later age, when the possession of these keys was a question to be decided by a world in arms, and Christian zeal might be stimulated by connecting them with the name of the great Christian emperor. Be this as it may, the connection of Charlemagne with the Caliphate, in the days of its "golden prime," was a fitting complement to his relations with the Papacy and the Byzantine empire; for these three powers were, as Sir J. Stephen has somewhere said, the three venerable or splendid ideas which held in bondage the imagination of mankind.

(II.) The wars of Charlemagne, therefore, were something very different from the freebooting razzias of his Merovingian predecessors. They were the more full and skilful development of a policy which had been inaugurated by the Pepins and Charles Martel; a policy which had for its object to keep Barbarism at a distance, and gradually to absorb into the Frank empire all the sources of strength, political or territorial, which could be gathered from the *débris* of the

patrimony of the Cæsars. Elevated above all his predecessors in the path which he pursued, by the fixed purpose to make the progress of civilization coincide with the march of conquest, Charlemagne has larger claims upon the admiration of posterity, in his character as lawgiver and administrator, than as victor over half the contemporary world. He saw that all attempts at true culture and improvement must begin at home, and he wisely began his efforts to introduce something like organization into the state, by calling into more vigorous action that body which was both best able to understand the national interests and most disposed to aid in promoting them. The free assemblies of the Franks (under the Merovingian dynasty) had fallen into disuse, as the natural consequence of a transition from forest life to the interests and occupations of an incipient civilization. By Pepin of Heristal, however, they had been partially revived, and Charlemagne, in pursuance of a policy which gave strength to the Carlovingian line, convoked every spring and autumn the national assemblies which had originated in the tribe-meetings of his Teutonic ancestors, and which undoubtedly formed the germ of all similar institutions, whether Diets, Cortes, Parliaments, or States-general. Of these assemblies, the chroniclers enumerate thirty-five between the years 770 and 813. That convoked in spring, and styled "the Field of May," alone had the privilege of passing laws; and in it the third estate, or the people, were associated with the clergy and nobles. The autumnal assembly, on the contrary, was composed only of bishops, abbots, and peers. Its duties were entirely deliberative, and, indeed, its principal function appears to have been the preparation of measures for discussion in the following spring. But the Field of May, the origin, as I have said, of the States-general, either passed laws of its own or afforded its sanction to those already decided upon by the sovereign. The latter was most probably their chief task. The prodigious mental activity of

the emperor found vent in the construction of what are still known as the Capitularies, a vast body of laws heaped together in wild confusion, and dealing with all imaginable topics, ecclesiastical, military, financial, scholastic, and sumptuary. Sir J. Stephen has well explained, in reference to their incoherent arrangement, that in this respect they resembled the petitions of parliament presented to our own Plantagenet kings at the close of each session of parliament. No classification was attempted, nothing but a simple chronological order observed, and the whole became collectively a single statute, often comprising the most incongruous contents. But this can in no wise diminish our wonder at the infinite number and diversity of the subjects to which the Capitularies refer. We have ecclesiastical canons; the terms and requirements of military service; laws relating to property and crime, accommodated to the native codes of the numerous nationalities which the Empire contained; fiscal and administrative provisions for the management of the royal estates, descending to the minutest particulars; minutes and regulations for the management of schools, which might produce despair in her Majesty's inspectors, and complete instructions for the *Missi Dominici*, or royal officers, whose duty it was to gallop into every corner of those vast dominions, and report to Aachen or Ingelheim whatever might seem to require the sovereign's attention. There has appeared to certain writers—Gibbon among the number—something ridiculous in this association of things great and little. They speak with contempt of a central authority which was directed at one and the same time to matters so incongruous as the settlement of a church usage, and the laying of eggs upon the royal farms. But, perhaps, all *very* great minds partake more or less of the resemblance to an elephant's trunk, which picks up a needle as easily as it rends an oak. Of Charlemagne this seems especially true.

The machinery employed to carry out the requirements of

this astonishing mental activity was not entirely central. It is true that the appointment of the "Missi Dominici" evinces a tendency to that centralization which has ever found favour in France. But the dukes, counts, vicars, centeniers, scabini, and other officers who administered the business of their several localities, appear to have exercised the functions of tax-collectors, judges, and police magistrates, as well as the more feudal office of levying and equipping troops. Nor must we omit the beneficiaries, though into the vexed question of their tenure we cannot fully enter here. It seems probable that when the purely allodial fiefs failed to fulfil the purpose of their institution, and the military service suffered by their lapse or accumulation in single hands, a new species of tenure was invented, according to which, lands granted by the sovereign returned to him, when no longer in condition to furnish the aid, or fulfil the purpose for which they were intended. But revocation is always an invidious, and often an impolitic act. It is not, therefore, surprising that it became an unusual one, and that the two tenures, allodial and beneficial, differed, very little in practice from each other. We cannot suppose that machinery so complex worked without a flaw, or that it obtained in any permanent form, or commensurate degree, the results for which it was put in motion. But we must not on that account withhold our admiration from the gigantic effort made in so dark and stormy an age to substitute Christianity for Paganism, political security for perpetual invasion, order for anarchy, and knowledge for ignorance, throughout the largest portion of a continent inhabited by disorganized nationalities, widely differing from each other in habits, interests, laws, locality, and race.

The objection which has been most frequently and most vehemently urged against the policy and actions of Charlemagne, is the undue elevation to which he has been supposed to have exalted the Church. It is for this reason, probably,

that he has met with such scant justice at the hands of Gibbon, who, however, admits that he is the only man to whose name posterity has indissolubly united the title of "great." But in this matter he has hardly been judged according to the circumstances of the age in which he lived and was compelled to act. We may doubt, in the first instance, whether that "power," which is the offspring of "knowledge," would not have placed the Church in her dominant position among a semi-barbarian people, even if he had disliked such a result. A power which acted by a temporal as well as a spiritual leverage, upon the inert ignorance of the masses; which dispensed the conveniences of this life, and the hopes and fears which appertain to another, had little to apprehend, with regard to the strength of its influence, from a conqueror, however great, or a lawgiver, however wise. But between Charlemagne and the Church there was no antagonism in action or design. If all the objects of his life could be concentrated into and expressed by a single word, that word would be—civilization. Now, upon the lowest view of the case, the great work of civilization cannot be elaborated among a half-civilized race, without instructing them in the things that make up the highest objects of human life; without giving them some taste for art, science, and the refining influences which follow in their train; without some knowledge of the destinies of their species, as it is to be learnt from the working of human societies in the past; without some notion of those moral capacities and responsibilities which elevate us above the imperfect instincts and grovelling appetites of the brutes that perish. Where, in the ninth century, could have been sought the means or the men to do these things, save in the Christian church? In the Church alone were to be found the instruments and the materials for education. The Church had a monopoly of all the knowledge which the age possessed, in science, in art, in philosophy, in history, and above all, in religion. The

Church alone had the opportunity and the authority to appeal to those deep-seated instincts in the heart of man, which tell him, even in his profoundest degradation, that he is an heir of immortality. The cycle of the seven sciences, as they were called, were the only intellectual accomplishments of the time; and with these, the clergy alone were conversant. It was natural, therefore, that Charlemagne should have looked to ecclesiastics for the furtherance of his projects for social improvement; it is natural that he should have gathered them around him, and encouraged them when they came; it is natural that his educational schemes, when carried out, should have taken the shape of cathedral and conventual schools. Our own Saxon Alcuin, Mailros his contemporary, a disciple of the venerable Bede, Peter of Pisa, Paulinus of Aquitaine, and Clement an Irishman, were among the most illustrious of that brilliant assemblage who formed themselves into a society called the "School of the Palace," and received their royal master within their ranks as a student of grammar, rhetoric, music, and astronomy. Nor was the zeal of the imperial neophyte engrossed by his own education. "He founded and supported schools," says Bonnechose, "in a multitude of places; he often instructed in them himself, and by his personal interrogations ascertained the progress of his pupils." Patronage of learning was, therefore, necessarily accompanied by patronage of ecclesiastics. Indeed they were the same thing. We must set the good against the evil, and perhaps we shall find that the former predominated. But that there is a dark as well as a bright side to the picture, it would be uncandid to deny. The arrogant pretensions asserted by the clergy after the death of Charlemagne, may, in some measure, be attributed to the exalted functions performed by them during his life, and the despotism of the bishops in the temporal affairs of the empire has not unreasonably been traced to the share

in the civil administration which he encouraged them to claim, and permitted them to exercise.

(III.) In any effort of the mind to represent unto itself the personal attributes of the great Carlovingian emperor, it becomes indescribably confused, owing to the double image presented to the vision by the historic and the legendary Charlemagne. To the mediæval imagination, excited by the romantic strains of Minnesingers and Trouvères, the last was undoubtedly predominant. His mother, "Berthe aux grans pies,"—"Bertha of the large feet" (the original, perhaps, of the goose-footed queen still known in nursery tales), daughter of the king of Hungary, the betrothed of Pepin, for whom a false Bertha was substituted by the officer intrusted to bring home the royal bride, is as mythical a personage as Deiainra or Ariadne. Her wanderings in the forest; her residence with the good miller of Mans, for whom she spins so gracefully and so patiently; the coming of King Pepin when lost in the chase; his love at first sight for the gentle peasant maid; the gradual *dénouement* of the truth; the punishment of the traitors; the marriage of the lovers, and the birth of Charles, form an introduction to the life of the hero of Carlovingian romance, which removes him at once into the region of the fabulous. And when at last he emerges into the twilight land which lies between the domains of Legend and History, he becomes, after the immemorial habit of the myth, the nucleus round which are concreted innumerable traditions of warlike enterprise and religious animosity, — the spontaneous products of a time when the instincts which underlie both are in a state of preternatural excitement.

Charlemagne, surrounded by his paladins and "Douze Pairs," like the British Arthur amid his Knights of the Round Table, formed a much more distinct and familiar image in the popular mind, than the great monarch who

sat as a real lawgiver in the court of his palace at Aix-la-Chapelle. And probably his relations with Haroun Alraschid, and the actual incidents of the Saracenic wars, were altogether distorted and obscured by the legends of his campaigns in Spain and the Holy Land, to win from the children of Mahoun the sacred relics of Calvary, the crown of thorns, the holy lance, and the nails of the true cross. But it is through this delusive medium that the image of Charlemagne has generally been presented to our modern perceptions. Coloured by the prismatic light of legend, myth, and song, the form of the greatest man of early European times assumes to the gazer's eye a brilliant, but strangely changeful aspect. We fill up, from mingled sources of history and romance, a great though indistinct outline,—the vast but well-knit body, the towering stature, the "dome-shaped" skull, the broad, lofty forehead, with the "large quick eye" beneath, the snowy hair and beard which swept his waist, like the blossoming hawthorn or the flowering laurestinus, the giant strength which could cleave a knight in twain at a single blow, from helmet-peak to saddle-bow, his famous sword Joyeuse, with its religious legend engraven on the blade—"Decem præceptorum custos Carolus;" his death-dealing spear, supposed by some to be the very lance which pierced the Saviour's side; his glittering mail of proof; the large robes of otter-skin in which he sat wrapped, while, during the long winter evening, he listened to the "*barbara et antiquissima carmina*" of his favourite bards, most probably the earliest rhapsodies of the Niebelungenlied; his hearty, jovial spirit, the outpouring of a great, strong, sensuous nature; his *bonhomie*, developed in practical jokes upon pedants and fools; his strong common sense, his courtesy, his patronage of learning, his feats of strength, his amours, his restless locomotion, his laborious efforts to write, his fatherly fondness for those beautiful but unworthy daughters whom he could not bear to leave behind, even in his warlike expedi-

tions—all these form a complex portraiture most probably very unlike "the rough, tough, and shaggy old monarch," as Sir F. Palgrave calls him, who had the courage, the energy, and the skill to govern that wild ninth-century world. Yet it may be doubted whether some modern writers have not wandered still further from the original, while they ignore the lapse of a thousand years, and depict a constitutional monarch of modern Europe. "Each generation, or school" says Sir F. Palgrave (with some little exaggeration), "has endeavoured to exhibit him as a normal model of excellence. Courtly Mezeray invests the son of Pepin with the faste of Louis Quatorze; the polished Abbé Velly bestows upon the Frankish emperor the abstract perfection of a dramatic hero. Boulainvilliers, the champion of the noblesse, worships the founder of hereditary feudality; Mably discovers in the Capitularies the maxims of popular liberty; Montesquieu the perfect philosophy of legislation."* There is considerable force in the same writer's remark, that, after all, it is an equivocal commendation to pronounce a great man in advance of his age. One important element of greatess is to comprehend our age and the work which we have to do in it. Failure in this is ill excused by that sort of imputation upon the Divine counsels which implies that we have been misplaced in an uncongenial generation. In a certain sense, doubtless, Charlemagne may be described as in advance of his times; in a certain sense, his work may be said to have been premature. Yet he was emphatically the man of his age; he fully understood it, its wants and capacities, its sources of weakness, and its sources of strength. The vine-clad rocks of the Rhine, and the Minsters whose towers are reflected in its waves, are memorials of his care for the moral and physical well-being of his people; and his conquests, his Capitularies, his Fields of May, his Missi Dominici, and

* Palgrave's History of Normandy, vol. i. p. 25.

his Schools, are all evidences of a similar anxiety to seize the instrument as occasion offered it, for carrying out those large conceptions, and schemes for social improvement, which distinguish him from most great wielders of the sword. This is I think patent from any candid consideration of his policy, and the objects to which his life were devoted. They were—I gladly quote words of more weight than my own—"to conciliate the attachment of his German subjects, by studiously maintaining their old Germanic institutions; to anticipate, instead of awaiting, the invasions of the barbarous nations by whom he was surrounded; to court the alliance and support of all other secular potentates of the East and West; and to strengthen his own power by the most intimate relations with the Church." These principles he probably derived from the former representatives of the Carlovingian house; it is possible, however, to discover others which were more emphatically the growth of his own mind. "It was only in a mind of surpassing depth and fertility that such maxims could have been nurtured and made to yield their appropriate fruits. For, first, he firmly believed that the power of his house could have no secure basis except in the religious, moral and intellectual, and social improvement of his subjects; and, secondly, he was no less firmly persuaded that, in order to that improvement, it was necessary to consolidate all temporal authority in Europe, by the reconstruction of the Cæsarean empire—that empire beneath the shadow of which, religion, law, and learning had so long and so widely flourished throughout the dominions of imperial Rome." *

That Charlemagne did not suceeed in these grand designs during his life, and that, after his death, scarce even the recollection of them was left to fire the ambition or form the policy of his immediate successors, is one of the established

* Sir J. Stephen, vol. i. Lect. iii.

facts of history. But the result might have been anticipated. To no human being is it given to *create*. Great empires are the growth of ages. National institutions, and the habits of mind which render them durable, ripen by slow processes, like the vaster products of the material world, and no single genius, however gigantic, can confer upon them, in a lifetime, the shape and consistency which it requires ages to elaborate. So it was with the imperial fabric erected by Charlemagne. It fell because it was the creation of a single man. Pallas sprang full-armed into life; but it was from the brain of Jove. Only the Omnipotent and Immortal can set aside the fixed laws of organic development, and confer maturity upon men or nations at their birth. Yet are we to say that the whole really passed away like "the baseless fabric of a vision," leaving not "a wreck behind"? This would be to misunderstand the character of the man and of his work.

Charlemagne deserves to be considered as one of the greatest among the heroic men of history, because he combined with the moral and material elements of greatness, larger opportunities for its exercise than have fallen to the lot of most among his rivals for the world-sanctioned name of "Great." He was great in valour and military skill; great in victory and territorial conquest; great in intellectual activity and the giant power of his unwearied energy; great in his religious instincts, as religion was understood and practised among his contemporaries, despite his aberrations from the highest standard of Christian purity; great in his genius for legislation and affairs, and above all, great beyond the common claimants for the name, in a firmly-fixed desire to make every act of legislation, no less than every acquisition of arms, minister more or less directly to the welfare of the nationalities beneath his rule.

And what we have said of the man, must be said of his work. It was as great as himself. The task which lay before him, was nothing less than the reconstitution of a world.

Through him the old civilization was to form the new. Through him the ancient empire was to pass, by a new and painful birth, into the still more august image of a common Christendom; and the stage upon which the problem was to be worked out, was nothing less than the whole portion of the habitable globe, which was, at that period, the home of civilized life. In answer, therefore, to the question which we have proposed, we must reply that, though to the heedless eye, the vast and imposing fabric of Carlovingian imperialism *did* pass away "like the baseless fabric of a vision," it is *not* true, that it "left not a wreck behind." No great idea, that has even partially clothed itself in fact, ever perishes from the memory of the world. By the vastness of the ruin we conjecture the proportions of the mighty pile upon whose *débris* we tread. We do more; we are led by an undefinable sentiment to re-construct the edifice in imagination, to shape out once more its stately pillars and its walls, to people it again with the living multitudes who surged through its gates. The heroic Carlovingian slept in his tomb at Aix-la-Chapelle; his empire and its institutions passed away; the laws he had framed, the learning he had encouraged, the conquests he had made, the unity he had so painfully elaborated—were trampled in the mire and gore of battle by his degenerate descendants; the transient splendours of the resuscitated empire were followed by the dreariest and most disastrous period in the history of the human race, as the feudal system slowly struggled into birth; but let us not believe that all the ignorance, rapine, and crime,—all the blood and tears of those dark days, obliterated from the imagination of men the civilizing work of Charlemagne. The glories of the Roman Cæsars were separated by too great a gulf from the new world of thought and sentiment which had arisen since their fall; the old imperial image was too faint and too dimly distant to affect the mind of mediæval Europe. Had no new power, less alien in time

and race, intervened between the great power of the past and the confused tyranny of feudalism, there would have been nothing to keep alive in the mind of modern nations the grand idea of imperial unity or a common Christendom. It is true that no man may, in exact terms, describe the influence of this idea upon the European mind, estimate its past action, or foretell its future developments. Nevertheless, it abides as a fact. It is not ours to unravel the complications of politics, or to seek for uncertain glimpses of the future destinies of nations, as they may be modified by dynastic ambition or the aspirations of race; but we may be permitted to hope, that, for the sake of the great cause of humanity, for the best and dearest interests of men, the instincts so often abused, may be directed to objects which resemble those of Henri IV. more than those of Napoleon I.; and that the soul of the poet was really kindled by "the vision and the faculty divine," as he saw, in the light of a slowly uncoiling future, the auspicious hour,

> "When the war-drum throbs no longer, and the battle-flags
> are furl'd
> In the Parliament of man—the Federation of the World!"

LECTURE X.

SPAIN—THE VANDALS, ALANI, SUEVI, VISIGOTHS.

"La monarchie des Visigoths, après la chute de l'Arianisme, est l'établissement des barbares le plus profondément marqué de la domination ecclésiastique ; de là cet esprit d'équité, de justice impartiale, l'énervement des habitudes militaires, qui modifie les tendances conquérantes et voyageuses des Goths primitifs ; sous l'influence absorbante des évêques, tout ce peuple s'occupe des règles de la législation civile et militaire."—CAPEFIGUE, *Les quatre premiers Siècles de l'Eglise Chrétienne*, vol. iv. ch. 27.

SYNOPSIS.—Spanish history interesting to Englishmen.—Spain discovered by the Phœnicians; its state under Roman occupation; involved in the struggle between Honorius and Constantine, &c. ; frightful result of it ; invaded from Gaul by the Vandals, Sueves, and Alani ; conquered for Rome by the Visigoths.—The Visigoths established in Gaul ; are driven over the Pyrenees by the Franks ; they found a Visigoth kingdom in Spain ; its character and annals.—The Councils of Toledo. —The Suevic kingdom incorporated by the Visigoths.—The conversion of the Visigoths from Arianism ; they drive the Byzantine Greeks from the seacoast.—Brilliant period.—Arrival of the Saracens.—Roderic and Count Julian.—Battle of Xeres.—Complete triumph of the invaders.—Its causes : (1.) Physical degeneracy ; (2.) Domestic dissensions ; (3.) Persecution of the Jews.—Organization of the Christian kingdoms which finally expelled the Mohammedans.

IT is observed by an able historian, who has done much to confirm the truth of his own remark, that Englishmen have contributed more to the illustration of Spanish history than that of any country except their own. This may be accounted for by the fact that our relations with Spain were intimate, if not agreeable, at a time when our literature was rapidly developing, and the national intelligence keenly alive to the great questions at issue between the two coun-

tries. The part played by Spain on the stage of European politics, during the lifetime of Henry VIII. and his immediate successors, was that of a leading, if not of the chief, actor in a drama of great and absorbing interest. The union of its saturnine and fanatical monarch with the daughter of Henry, and the subsequent appearance of the invincible armada in the English Channel, brought home to the English mind, and perpetuated, the impressions which it had already received from the grasping policy and formidable power of Charles V. And had such impressions been likely to fade away, incidents were not wanting to revive them. The long rivalry of the two nations in the Spanish main; the sack of towns and capture of galleons, with all the spirit-stirring adventures of Drake and Raleigh; the wars of after-times, which saw the ingots of Mexico and Peru pass in cartloads through the streets of London to the treasury of the Tower; the exploits of Anson and his enterprising followers, inflamed the popular imagination, and kept alive the memory of our former struggle for life or death with that proud and valiant race. Above all, the religious instincts of the English people kept them in a state of lively and lasting antagonism to a country which they regarded, and rightly regarded, as the stronghold of the Romanist faith, in its most exclusive, bitter, and persecuting form. These considerations are enough, I think, to account for the fact which Mr. Prescott has observed, and for the attention bestowed by our ancestors on the history of Spain. The political decadence of the country itself, and the marvellous phenomena which have been exhibited by the annals of France for the last hundred years, equally explain the change which has taken place in public opinion, and the direction of public interest, since the days of Elizabethan writers and the popular adventurers of the early Georgian era. Yet the history of Spain yields to none other in the possession of those elements which render history attractive.

In romantic incident and legends of heroic stamp; in sudden alternations of fortune; in long and resolute struggles against adversity; in constitutional development; in the complicated relations of rival states, resulting in the consolidation of one great central power; in the marvellous consequences of vast commercial and territorial aggrandisement; in the action of religion and religious institutions upon the body politic;—in these, and many similar things, the story of Spain supplies abundant materials for excitement and instruction. It is only with a small part of this great subject that we at present have to deal. Anterior to the attempt of Charlemagne to establish himself south of Pyrenees, the history of Spain resolves itself into three general topics,—the great barbaric inroad of Sueves, Alans, and Vandals, which finally broke up Roman rule in the Peninsula; the annals of the Visigoth dynasty, which replaced it; and the Mohammedan conquest. Those Christian kingdoms which, from the effects of mutual gravitation, coalesced into the Spain of Charles V. and Philip II., in the eighth century only existed in their germs among the mountain-fastnesses, inaccessible to the cavalry of the Saracen invader. It will form a subject for future consideration, to observe the manner and the degrees by which the kingdoms of Navarre, Aragon, Castile, and Portugal arose, slowly gathered strength, united, and expelled the infidel. At present, we are concerned with a different, yet scarcely less interesting subject—the fortunes of the Vandal, the Visigoth, and the Saracen. But we must first say a very few words upon the previous condition of the country.

Spain seems to have derived its appellation from a Phœnician source. The Phœnicians were the earliest foreign visitors who explored her shores, attracted by the veins of metallic wealth which intersected her rugged mountains; and they have left a memorial of their presence in the cities

of Cadiz and Medina Sidonia, named from the Sidon on their own coast. The voyagers who first beheld the rabbit upon her shores, bestowed the name of that useful, though not very heroic animal, upon the new land. If the story be true, as we have at least Roman authority for believing,* the word has won for itself a more glorious and permanent life than that which often falls to the lot of appellations boasting a more dignified etymology. Useful for its natural resources, and illustrious from the valiant character of its people, Spain became the prize contested by Roman and Carthaginian arms, long before Gaul itself had attracted the cupidity of that aspiring race, with whom to covet was to conquer the world. One hundred and fifty years before Cæsar landed on the coast of Kent, Spain was reduced to a Roman province. The lapse of a century and a half impressed, as might have been expected, the stamp of Roman manners and institutions more powerfully upon a country so long subjected to the arms of Rome, than upon the later acquisitions of her sword. Indeed, even now, the material works raised by Roman skill and labour in the Peninsula,—such, for instance, as the aqueduct of Segovia,—are admitted, by competent judges, to rival, or perhaps surpass, the more famous relics of the same gigantic genius in Italy and the south of France. The Spanish provinces were, therefore, favourites with the central power during the republican as well as the imperial era; and in ages long subsequent, the effects of this intimate connection continued to exhibit themselves in a somewhat singular manner. We know, from contemporary writers, how important was the part played by Spain in that long series of struggles out of which Augustus finally emerged as ruler of the world; and they also inform us of the pains taken for its pacification

* In Addison's Dialogue upon Medals may be seen a Roman medal representing a female seated upon a rock, with a rabbit perched upon her foot. It is the emblem of Spain.

and settlement by that master of imperial statecraft. The division adopted by his government was threefold: Lusitania, corresponding to the modern kingdom of Portugal; Bætica, which included Granada and Andalusia; and Tarraconensis, which may be regarded as comprising the remainder of the Peninsula. When the Roman world was broken up, this favoured and splendid portion of the great inheritance fell mainly to the Visigoths; not, however, in the first instance, or entirely. As early as the middle of the third century, some barbarous tribes, members of the Frank confederation, after laying waste the greatest part of Gaul, adopted what must then have been the most daring project of crossing the Pyrenees. For twelve years, the Spanish provinces were subjected to the most frightful ravages. Cities, the growth of a long and prosperous peace, were ruthlessly sacked by barbarian races, of whose very existence they had scarcely dreamed. Tarragona was entirely reduced to ashes. When nothing more was left to plunder, the Franks disappeared, by way of the sea, into Mauritania, as rapidly as they had come; and Spain seems to have enjoyed a long rest from the agitations and sufferings which disturbed the less-fortunate portions of the Empire. But the time was at hand when, even in that remote province, the prestige of imperial protection was to be of no avail. We have elsewhere given, with full particulars, an account of the events by which this was brought about.* The great inroad of the Sueves, Alani, and Vandals into Gaul has been already described. We have seen the fearful devastation which they committed in the years 407 and 408, in the southern provinces of that country; and we have also seen that, for a moment, this terrible surge of barbarian war was rolled back from the roots of the Pyrenees. But the respite was not of long duration. The circumstances which brought them over the mountain-barrier of Spain were these.

* See Lecture VIII.

Spain itself was at this time agitated by a struggle between two rival candidates for the empire; Honorius, son of the Spaniard Theodosius, and Constantine, who had been raised to the imperial throne by the legionaries of Britain. The former was, naturally, supported by the national party in the peninsula; but Constantine was represented by Gerontius, an able general, who had the advantage of receiving perpetual reinforcements from the armies of Britain and Gaul. The popular cause speedily succumbed; the soldiers of Constantine pillaged the conquered country, and the passes of the Pyrenees were confided to the care of a tribe of their barbarian auxiliaries, the Marcomanni. It is said that the latter invited their German compatriots into Spain. But ere this we find them serving under the standard of Gerontius, who had by this time cast off all allegiance to his former friend and master, and was grasping at the imperial purple really for himself, though nominally for his creature and client, or, as others say, his son, an obscure officer of the guard, named Maximin. With an army composed of Sueves, Alani, and Vandals, he encountered Constans, the son of Constantine, and defeated him. The next year he invaded Gaul, with the intention of dethroning Constantine himself. At first he was successful. Vienne and Constans fell into his hands. Constans he beheaded, and proceeded to lay siege to Arles, which Constantine had made his capital. Then occurred a singular combination of circumstances. We have already seen that Ataulphus, the successor of the great Alaric, had, from caprice or policy, placed his sword at the service of Honorius, the Roman emperor. Honorius saw no better employment for the fierce Goths who had sacked his capital and frightened all Italy from its propriety, than to launch them beyond the Alps, against his two formidable rivals Constantine and Gerontius. The Goths arrived at the very moment when the latter was besieging the former in the city of Arles.

A.D. 409.

They were commanded for Honorius by Constantius, his future brother-in-law, a noble Goth, who had saved Placidia, the emperor's sister, in the great sack of Alaric, and who subsequently espoused her. Constantius was eminently successful. No sooner did he appear upon the scene, than he was joined by the troops of Gerontius, who slew himself in mortification and despair. Constantine was equally unfortunate, and soon surrendered. In the mean time, Ataulphus had disposed of Jovin, another pretender to the empire, and sent his head to Honorius. But scarcely two years elapsed before Ataulphus and Honorius became enemies. The latter was maintaining the claims of Attalus, a puppet of the great Alaric, who had twice already raised him to the throne and deposed him. Once more Constantius appeared in arms for his master, defeated Ataulphus in a great battle near Narbonne, and restored to Honorius undisputed possession of the Western world. But amid this terrible phantasmagoria of wars, revolts, battles, sieges, and assassinations, what must have been the condition of the wretched people whose country was the scene of this sanguinary drama! Compelled to furnish sustenance to every army that entered their confines; pillaged alike by those who vanquished and those who fled; constrained into unwilling allegiance to each ephemeral emperor who reigned the victor of the hour, and burdened with new imposts, as one cause and court succeeded to another;—what marvel, if they sounded the utmost depths of poverty and endurance? The final result of all these "dim complicacities," to use an expression of Mr. Carlyle's, so far as the Spanish provinces were concerned, was the expulsion of the Sueves, Alani, and Vandals from Gaul, by Constantine and the Franks, whom he had induced warmly to adopt his cause. In the month of October, 409, they accepted the proposal of the Marcomanni, and plunged through the passes of the Pyrenees,—the Vandals under the conduct of Gunderic,

A.D. 409.

their king; the Sueves commanded by Hermeric; the Alani by a leader named Respendial. The dismal tragedy of their Gaulish inroad was once more repeated, with aggravated violence on their part, and aggravated misery upon the part of the sufferers. Contemporary writers tell us that famine and pestilence followed the relentless exaction of Roman officials, the pillage of contending armies, and the devastating sword of the barbarians. Thousands perished for want of food; men ate each other's flesh; mothers were seen to devour their newborn offspring. Even the very beasts of prey, who were generally satiated with the corpses of those who had died of disease, or had been slain in battle, rendered desperate by hunger, were now seen to attack the living. The confederate nations proceeded to a partition of the country. Of the five provinces established by Constantine the Great, the Sueves and Vandals obtained the whole country between the Douro, the sea, and the Sierra d'Oca, comprising Galicia, Tras-os-Montes, and the northern portions of the kingdoms of Leon and Old Castile, the Asturias, and Biscay; the Alani, Lusitania and the Carthaginian district, or the part of Portugal between the Douro on the north, and the Guadiana on the south; Estremadura, New Castile between the Guadiana and the Tagus, and then Murcia and Valencia. The Silingi Vandals, the second tribe of the nation, had Bætica for their portion,—the country included between the Guadiana and the sea, or the modern Andalusia. The province of Tarraconensis was left to the Roman emperor, or rather to his representative Gerontius. Upon the death of the latter, Honorius officially recognized this partition. That the recognition was a mere temporary expedient and a cheat, we have already seen: it was never meant to secure Spain to its new possessors. Of these, the Vandals were of course the most powerful and important. They have left in "Andalusia," "the Vandal land," a lasting record of

A.D. 412.

their name and glory. Still, inasmuch as the Vandal occupation cannot be regarded as a permanent one, we have been compelled, by the nature of our plan, to treat of it in the general account already given of the fortunes of their tribe.* It is only necessary to take up the thread of our history at the point of their final displacement by the Goths; a result which was not effected without several previous repulses and defeats. There is some variety of opinion respecting the circumstances attending their appearance in Spain. Orosius informs us, in a passage which has been variously interpreted,

A.D. 414. that, as early as the year 414, Ataulphus, the Gothic king, had been compelled by Constantius to withdraw from Gaul into Spain. Gibbon asserts that he "surprised, in the name of the emperor, the city of Barcelona." But the city of Barcelona, and the whole province of Tarraconensis, were already the property of the emperor, in virtue of the partition already described. There is no reason to suppose the existence of any treaty or special agreement between Goths and Romans. The former, as other writers hint, crossed the mountains, from the ordinary causes which give impulse to all barbarian migration —want, and the pressure of external force. And they conducted themselves after the usual fashion of barbarian immigrants, laying siege to the cities on their line of march, which they would scarcely have ventured to do had any compact subsisted between them and the imperial court. Six months after the occupation of Barcelona, Ataulphus

A.D. 415. perished by apoplexy or assassination, leaving behind him his royal widow, Placidia, the emperor's sister, whose hand had been sought by Constantius, the preserver of her life. His brother Wallia succeeded him upon the throne, and, by restoring her to Rome, established friendly relations with her brother the emperor, for whom he undertook once more to reduce to submission

* Lecture VII.

the Spanish provinces, now overrun by Vandals, Alani, and Sueves. He may, doubtless, have been willing to accept the assistance which the prestige of the imperial name would confer upon his arms; but it is impossible to believe that he prosecuted the war in any other interest than his own. During the two following years, he is said to have annihilated the Silingi Vandals, and so nearly annihilated the Alani, that the miserable remnant of the nation incorporated themselves with the Vandals properly so called, whose monarch, Gunderic, with his successors, henceforth received the double title of king of the Vandals and Alani. Wallia almost immediately returned to Gaul, and founded there, under the auspices of Rome, that powerful Visigoth kingdom whose fortunes we have traced in a previous lecture. The reasons for this return are not altogether patent. It seems clear, however, that notwithstanding the boastful language of the Gothic writers, Wallia either was unable to make any permanent impression upon the Vandal power, or had begun to distrust the sincerity of Rome. It is remarkable that, almost directly after his victory, he adopted the project of passing over into Africa. The same design, it will be remembered, was entertained by his predecessor and kinsman, the great Alaric, whose armament perished in the Sicilian strait. A like fate awaited the vessels of Wallia in the Strait of Gibraltar. He was compelled to retrace his steps, and once more to pass the Pyrenees into southern Gaul. Perhaps he owed the lands which he there received from imperial liberality, to a well-grounded apprehension lest he might be induced to repeat his attempt, and so deprive the capital of a province upon which it mainly depended for its subsistence.

A.D. 416—418.

His departure left the Vandals and Suevi masters of the Roman population of the Peninsula. In the struggle between the two for supremacy, the former were successful; but before many years had elapsed, they were induced to repeat the

experiment in which both Alaric and Wallia had failed.

A.D. 429. At the invitation of Boniface, they passed over into Africa, in the year 429 A.D. Upon the probable causes of this adventurous policy, and the circumstances which attended on its execution, we have already commented with some minuteness.* It is, therefore, needless now to repeat the history of the establishment of the Vandals in Africa. They left behind them the Suevi, the last remaining members of the triple confederation, and these soon established a widely-extended domination over the old half-Romanized inhabitants who still continued to cling to the traditions and manners of the Empire. Several years passed away without events of importance. But in the mean time, great things were occurring beyond the Pyrenees. The Visigoth kingdom, founded by Wallia in the south of France, soon outgrew its dependence upon the patronage of Rome, and for a brief period assumed the leading place among all the new barbarian nationalities. Taking advantage of the decrepitude of the Empire, the Visigoths "annexed" the territory of Narbonne to their kingdom, and ruled over all the land between the Garonne and the Loire. This expansion brought them into contact with the people of the great mountain-chain which separated them from the Roman provinces in Spain, and with the inhabitants of those provinces themselves. Every nation, as we have before observed in the case of Ermanaric and the original Ostrogoth monarchy, boasts, in its early days, of some hero-monarch great alike in policy and war. Among the Visigoths, Euric seems to occupy this place. Not only did he largely extend his paternal dominions in Gaul, about the time that Rome succumbed to Odoacer and barbarian rule, but he also crossed the great military barrier of the Pyrenees, and in a single year reduced all Spain beneath his

* Lecture VII.

sceptre, compelling even the Suevi to hold their kingdom of Gallicia as a sort of appanage to his crown. A.D. 471. His reign formed for the Visigoth people the culminating point of their political grandeur and military power; for he received from the sovereign, who now ruled at Rome, the formal cession of Gaul and Spain,—one of those gifts which we may feel sure would never have been granted could they possibly have been withheld. But Euric came to an untimely end. He was succeeded by his son Alaric, a minor. It is, however, impossible in a stormy age for a minor to hold together a great empire agitated by internal dissension and menaced by foreign arms. The terrible Frank confederation had arisen in the north of Gaul, and evinced a determination to allow no antagonist dynasty between the Rhine and the ocean, the marshes of Belgium and the peaks of the Pyrenees. Clovis had embarked upon his career of conquest, and soon, as we have seen, smote down the power and pride of his Visigoth rival, with the Frankish battleaxe, upon the plains of Vouglé.* From that moment the Visigoths had practically done with Gaul. The tardy arrival of their renowned kinsman Theodoric, the great Ostrogoth ruler of Italy, saved for the vanquished a narrow strip of land to the north of the Pyrenees. Probably it also saved for them their trans-Pyrenean possessions. At any rate, it transferred the Visigoth capital to Toledo from Toulouse, and determined for centuries the destiny of Spain. The commanding genius of Theodoric united for a time the kindred nations. For a time, the Ostrogoth on the Tiber, and the Visigoth on the Douro, obeyed the same master, and formed part of the same monarchy. It seemed as though the Gothic was about to substitute itself for the Roman name, and resuscitate the departed traditions of universal empire. But the death of the one great man

* Lecture VIII.

of the age divided the kindred nationalities once more, and Amalaric succeeding to the throne of Euric, inaugurated the long, dreary, and monotonous annals of the Visigoths of Spain.

A.D. 526.

The obscure and unimportant character of the Visigothic annals, says a late writer, extends over their whole duration. "From the accession of Amalaric to the overthrow of the monarchy, in the person of its last sovereign Roderic, we are required to survey a weary waste of nearly two centuries, barren alike either in events of intrinsic interest or foreign value. Through the thick darkness which shrouds all this period, we may indeed faintly discern the confusion and crimes of barbarian revolution; the disorders of a regal succession, which was rather elective in the noble blood of the Goths, than absolutely hereditary; endless civil wars, and disputed pretensions to the throne; the usual assassinations and atrocities which defiled all the palaces of Europe with blood and violence during the same ages; and, above all, the fierce bigotry of religious persecution, which even already seemed to have fore-marked the Peninsula for its chosen and durable theatre."* While acquiescing, however, generally in this language, we must admit that there is one subject connected with the period which deserves our attention, and the study of which will reward it.

The councils of Toledo have acquired a more particular interest than they would have otherwise possessed, because they are generally regarded as offering the first instance of anything like an approach to parliamentary institutions. To ourselves, who have learnt to consider popular representation as the chief element in a parliament, the resemblance will of necessity appear very faint; but if we go back to the etymological and original sense of the term, which simply implies *discussion*,—a thing in its real nature impossible under despotic governments,—we shall discover sufficient analogy

* Encyc. Metropolitana—History.

to justify us in connecting the Spanish assembly of clergy and notables with those parliaments of France and England, out of which has grown the representative system of modern times. We shall at least recognize in it an indication of the direction in which society was about to move, and a decided step in advance of the absolute and oriental silence of all classes upon questions of political right, into which the ancient world had subsided.

The constitution of the council does not appear, in its origin, to have differed from those which we find subsisting in France under the Carlovingians. The matters also with which the council in the first instance concerned itself, were probably very similar to those which engaged the synods of Saltz and Lestines. But as its members lived in a land isolated from the great contests of the age, and as they had to deal with the more peaceful Visigoth monarchs, and not with Carlovingian mayors or kings, they gradually drew towards themselves more of the elements of power, and assumed a larger political importance. Isidore of Seville, in the one country, may fairly be compared with Boniface in the other; but the French prelate had many more counteracting influences to contend against, a stronger and more self-willed master, and a country far more deeply involved in the turmoil of European war and domestic intrigue. To the Toledan councils were summoned, according to Hallam, "the dukes and other provincial governors, and in general the principal individuals of the realm, along with spiritual persons."* But even a very superficial examination of the "Acts" of these councils, as they have been published in ecclesiastical collections, will be sufficient to show that the last soon became the engrossing element in the whole. Nor, indeed, could it have well been otherwise. Even without taking into account the more special sources of spiritual

* Hallam, Hist. Middle Ages, vol. ii. p. 19.

influence in a superstitious age, it is easy to see, that in a deliberative assembly, unless there be disturbing causes, knowledge, eloquence, and a practical acquaintance with affairs, will always assert a manifest superiority. When the noble could rarely write his name, and the churchman possessed all the knowledge of the past, all the acquaintance with such rudiments of jurisprudence, theology, and science as survived in the general ignorance,—nay, even all the practical skill available for the common arts of life, it is little surprising that, when churchmen and nobles met together in an intellectual arena, the former very soon gave a tone to the deliberation, and directed it towards objects of their own. This is evident, even upon the most cursory inspection of the proceedings. The earliest canons with which we are acquainted go back to the year 400 A.D. They concern themselves with one of the most difficult problems of the age,—the means of asserting the true sanctity of Christian marriage, and the discouragement of concubinage, which was, however, so far tolerated as not to be considered a disqualification for Christian communion. The second council enters more closely into the same question, and still further purifies the marriage relation, and clears the conception of the family, by definitely laying down the "prohibited degrees." The third council is mainly occupied with proclaiming the conversion of the Visigoths, under Recald, to the orthodox church, and in framing a confession of faith, in close accordance with the formula of Nice. Its further provisions descend into minute particulars of ecclesiastical discipline; the observance of the Lord's day is strictly enjoined upon all men, under penalty of a fine and punishment by the lash. It would be easy to multiply examples, but these are sufficient to show how largely the "spiritual persons" had engrossed the action and the authority of the council, and how certain it was that, when social and political questions arose, they would be contemplated from an ecclesiastical stand-point.

As time went on, the bishops and the secular nobility were so mixed in the assemblies, that Capefigue is right in remarking upon the confusion of religious and political ideas, which prevailed in the council, and appeared in its acts. "The acts of the council of Toledo decided at the same time," he says, "questions of dogma and discipline, and pronounced sentence on the rights of property and government."* Yet this does not transfer, as he would insinuate, the responsibility of cruel and persecuting measures, in at least an equal share, to the lay element. For the reasons above given, the Church must accept alike the praise and blame which we may be pleased to assign to the acts of the council. It was an experiment in ecclesiastical legislation, and as such, perhaps, as little deserves the severe censure of Montesquieu† as the enthusiastic admiration of the Catholic Capefigue, who, speaking of the right assumed and actually exercised by the assembly to unseat archbishops and dethrone kings, exclaims, "Une visible équité, une science profonde, se manifestent dans ces jugemens du concile." The judgment of Gibbon, though so unsatisfactory to the ultramontane historian, is more fairly balanced; for he allows the merit of the Toledan notables "in composing a code of civil and criminal jurisprudence for the use of a great and united people." "I dislike the style," he adds in a note; "I detest the superstition; but I shall presume to think that the civil jurisprudence displays a more civil and enlightened state of society than that of the Burgundians, or even of the Lombards."‡ Against this is to be set the mistaken spirit, though it may have been the natural product of the times, which, as we have already said, enjoys the evil honour of having instituted persecution for religious opinion, and which most certainly contributed to the downfall of the kingdom by its treatment of the Jews.

* Capefigue, vol. iv. ch. 27. † Esprit des Lois, xxviii. 1.
‡ Gibbon, ch. xxxviii.

Whatever may have been the merits or demerits of this legislation, it produced, for the student and historian, that dreary monotony in the Visigoth annals of which the writer above complains. Monotony of annals, however, it must be remembered, does not of necessity imply misery in the people or incapacity in the government. We have almost no grounds for conjecturing the condition of the people during this unexciting period.

The events, however, which break this monotony between the accession of Amalaric and the invasion of the Saracens, and which most deserve our notice, are these: the incorporation of the Suevic kingdom with that of their conquerors; the conversion of the Arian Visigoths to the Catholic faith; and the reduction of the few maritime possessions which still belonged to the Greek emperor in Spain. The two first events were more closely connected than might appear possible at first sight. The Suevi, as we have shown, were originally established in the north-west part of the Peninsula. This has been found, even in the very latest times, to be the strongest position, in a strategical sense, which the whole country affords. Its former inhabitants were described by the Roman bard as untaught to suffer the Roman yoke; at the present hour, the partisans of Don Carlos linger among the sierras of Guipuzcoa and Biscay. Here, then, the Suevi, after having been driven from the plains, continued to maintain themselves in a sort of independence, till, about the year 584 A.D., they either yielded to the strong arm of the Visigoth king, or perhaps submitted to incorporation from a sense of its political advantages. Singularly enough, the Suevi, almost alone among their barbaric brethren, had adopted from the first the orthodox form of the Christian faith. More singularly still, after three years of amalgamation, they were enabled to impress it upon a people so much more powerful, and, as we may reasonably suppose, more

A.D. 584.

intellectual than themselves. After enumerating all the secondary causes and accidental circumstances which may have aided to bring about such a result, there still, I think, remains behind much which cannot be explained by the common rules and course of human conduct. The first predisposing influence is, however, undoubtedly to be found in the character and religious associations of what may be described as the substratum of Visigoth society. Spain had never entirely ceased to be Roman. Long before the barbaric invasion, its inhabitants had been deeply imbued with the opinions, practices, and spirit of Latin Christianity. The Church had come to them with all the prestige and authority of the Empire. They conceded to it the immemorial reverence which had ever clung around the mighty name of Rome, and obeyed instinctively the oracular utterances of a voice which spoke from the Seven Hills. At a very early period, therefore, we find the Spanish church orthodox even beyond the orthodoxy of Italy,—powerful, proud, and active in persecution. In the sentence of death pronounced against Priscillian and his followers, early in the fourth century, she claims the glory or the shame of the first serious persecution inflicted for religious opinions. Such a church, by her energy and her resources, must have struck deep root among the people. When, therefore, the Visigoths, with their Arian bishops and Arian creed, obtained possession of Spain, they doubtless encountered an antagonism not always latent or inoperative among the great masses of the subject population. Nor was there anything in Visigoth legislation, conducted, as it mainly was, under ecclesiastical inspirations, which was likely to conciliate the Catholics, or diminish their natural anxiety to strengthen and perpetuate their own form of faith, with, as they believed, its divinely-sanctioned institutions. Persecution of the most unrelenting sort seems to be one of the "cosas d'España," inexplicable to the foreigner, but inseparable from the soil under all phases

of its social condition. In this instance, it was eminently unsuccessful; for, in addition to the general disaffection which it produced, it brought about a romantic series of events, which may be considered as the proximate cause of the national conversion to orthodoxy. Hermenegild, son of the reigning monarch Leovogild, had sought a bride beyond the Pyrenees. Ingundis was daughter of a Merovingian king, and had, of course, been educated in the Catholic faith. But scarcely had the unfortunate princess reached her new home, before she was subjected to every species of ignominy by her husband's stepmother, on account of her religion, to which she was sincerely attached. The persecution at last became intolerable; and the indignation or pity of Hermenegild so wrought upon his mind that he was converted to the creed of the sufferer. The disaffected among the original population adopted the cause of the young couple. The result was a frightful civil war, in which the son was arrayed against the father, and the subject against his king. Though the struggle was long and sanguinary, the rebellion was at last subdued. Hermenegild fell into the hands of his incensed parent. He was offered the terrible alternative of apostasy or death. The young prince chose the latter. At first he was loaded with chains like a common malefactor, and confined in a filthy dungeon. But his resolution remained unshaken. It became necessary to dispatch him, and he met the fate which is said to have befallen the unfortunate Richard in Pomfret Castle: an assassin, secretly introduced into the prison, cleft open his skull with a battle-axe. The Romish church has commemorated his heroism, and canonized his name, in the legend of St. Hermenegild. "The blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church;" but rarely is it given to mortal eyes to witness so rapid and complete a growth as was seen in the kingdom of the Visigoths. Within a few years the Arian clergy and the Arian court were professing the faith which they had per-

secuted and proscribed. Recared, brother of the murdered man, had adopted his brother's creed; but he contrived to conceal the fact during the lifetime of his father. Upon Leovogild's decease, he boldly threw aside the mask, espoused the sister of Ingundis, proclaimed himself a Catholic, and invited his people to join him in adopting the faith of the martyred Hermenegild. The appeal was successful: it is difficult to understand how or why; but successful it was. A council, composed of Arian prelates, with the leading members of the Visigoth nobility, abjured their former heresy, and the mass of the nation immediately imitated their example. Then followed the most brilliant period of the Visigoth annals. Underneath its orthodox monarchs, the country reached its apogee of glory, and perhaps the precise time of its culmination coincided with the occurrence of the third event to which we have referred. About the year 552, the Greek Justinian, in that brief gleam of glory which gilded the evening of the Empire, made himself master of some places on the eastern coast of Spain, which the internal dissensions of the Visigoths had exposed to foreign arms. But when these dissensions had been appeased by the result of the great religious revolution, the relative position of the parties was inverted. The Visigoth king was strong, the Greek emperor was weak, and, as a natural consequence, the grasp of the latter upon his Spanish possessions became daily more and more feeble. Sisebert soon wrested from his rival the last remaining cities which acknowledged allegiance to the court of Byzantium, and established for himself an undisputed dominion throughout the whole Peninsula. Yet between this brilliant period and the astounding event which shattered the sceptre of the Visigoth, and scattered his people, like hunted wolves, among the Asturian mountains, barely eighty-seven years elapsed. This was but a short tenure of empire; a brief part to play in the great drama of the

A.D. 586.

A.D. 624.

world's destinies. But, for the general interests of society and civilization, it was doubtless long enough. We can discern nothing in the spirit or policy of the Visigoth dynasty which might induce us to regret its departure from the scene.

From one evil, however, which was exceedingly active and mischievous among their neighbours, the administration of the Visigoths appears to have been free. We hear nothing of that partition of kingdoms among the male members of the reigning family, which broke up the unity of the Merovingian monarchy, and became a source of weakness to the more powerful and politic Carlovingians. Though the crown was elective, the right of election was vested in a general assembly of nobles and bishops; and in their choice they never departed from the purest Gothic blood. And as some set-off against that picture of the manifold evils in legislation and practice which we have just quoted, it is perhaps only fair to add, from the writer himself, his estimate of the actual working of this mixed civil and ecclesiastical constitution:—"Upon the whole, the laws and the internal policy of the Spanish monarchy were far more equable and uniform, and probably better administered, than those of the Frankish empire." Nevertheless, the Spanish monarchy was soon to be swept away by an inundation against which the Frankish empire found a successful barrier in the wisdom of its rulers and the valour of its sons. The vices of the Visigoth kings, the feuds of the nobility, and the general misery of the people, appear to have reached their highest point in the reign of Witika. Witika was, in consequence, deposed; his throne was occupied by Roderic, who represented in his person the most illustrious Gothic lineage, after that of the royal house, which could be found in Spain. But the Visigoth Tarquin left behind him sons, who, like their prototypes, were prepared to struggle obstinately for their heritage; nor did Roderic exhibit the wisdom of the Roman Brutus. His court repeated the de-

grading scenes of luxury, lust, and rapine which had rendered his predecessor hateful to an insulted nobility and a suffering people. As a natural consequence, the old drama of disaffection and revolt was once more repeated, and the sons of Witika headed a powerful party against the reigning prince. To this party, in all probability, belonged Count Julian, governor of Ceuta, a strong fortress upon the African coast. At this distance of time, it is impossible to ascertain the exact causes which determined the strange conduct of Julian in this momentous crisis. He was a Goth of pure blood, member of a family renowned for valour and conduct in his country's wars. He had been himself distinguished for a resolute and successful defence of Ceuta against the Saracens. He suddenly appears as a dishonourable and bitter enemy to his sovereign and his native land. He delivers up his impregnable fortress, the scene of his glory, to a baffled foe, and brings upon himself the eternal infamy which attaches to the name of traitor and apostate. At his summons, and by his aid, the armies of the infidel were introduced into Spain. What motive could have induced, what injustice provoked, such incomprehensible treachery? It was naturally felt that the ordinary incitements of ambition or faction could not account for guilt so black as this. There must have been some bitter wrong goading on his spirit to madness and despair. Of any such wrong contemporaries do not speak. But after the lapse of a few centuries, the legend of Roderic's lust and the wrongs of Cava, the lovely daughter of the count, assumed a palpable form, and became a fixed article of popular belief. Are we to believe it also? The dispassionate historian, who looks only to the testimony of written records, is staggered by the absence of contemporary mention, and rejects the tale;—the poet, more deeply conversant with the workings of the human heart, will not believe that it could be stirred into such stormy action except by a cause connected with its more

passionate emotions, and repeats the tale how the destinies of an empire were changed by the dishonour of a Cava, a Virginia, or a Lucrece. We cannot venture to decide between them. The marvellous fact remains. When the eighth century opened upon the world, the tide of Mohammedan war had rolled on in one unbroken wave of victory from the borders of the Red Sea to the Pillars of Hercules and the great Western Ocean. But the caliphs were not in the predicament of Alexander: there were yet other worlds for them to conquer;—all Europe lay before them, rich with the treasures of ten centuries of civilization,—a noble prize for "the naked locust-eaters of the Arabian desert," a goodly heritage to be won for the children of the Prophet of God. There were but two portals through which, with their limited knowledge of maritime affairs, they could pass into this promised land,—the Bosphorus and the Straits of Gades. The former was fated in after-days to be the scene of their most successful effort. By this the Turcoman passed to the destruction of the Greek empire; by this the faith of Islam established a permanent settlement on the confines of European Christendom. But many centuries before this great event, another race, professing the same religious creed, but endowed with many more splendid and admirable qualities, availed themselves of the latter route. At the bidding, and with the aid of Julian, the Saracens poured in a resistless torrent across

> "The narrow seas, whose rapid interval
> Parts Afric from green Europe,"

and established themselves in the neighbourhood of that great Rock whose name is so famous in English history, whose form is so familiar to the English eye, and gave to it that appellation of world-wide renown—"Gibraltar," Gebel-al-Tarik, or the rock of Tarik, the chief who led these strange legions into the new land. Their coming, with its accredited

causes and consequences, has been described with striking spirit and fidelity by a great English poet :—

"Long had the crimes of Spain cried out to Heaven ;
At length the measure of offence was full.
Count Julian call'd the invaders ; not because
Inhuman priests with unoffending blood
Had stain'd their country ; not because a yoke
Of iron servitude oppress'd and gall'd
The children of the soil ;—a private wrong
Roused the remorseless baron. Mad to wreak
His vengeance for his violated child
On Roderic's head, in evil hour for Spain,
For that unhappy daughter and himself,—
Desperate apostate,—on the Moors he call'd ;
And, like a cloud of locusts, whom the South
Wafts from the plains of wasted Africa,
The Mussulmen upon Iberia's shore
Descend. A countless multitude they came ;
Syrian, Moor, Saracen, Greek renegade,
Persian, and Copt, and Tartar,—in one bond
Of erring faith conjoin'd ; strong in the youth
And heat of zeal ; a dreadful brotherhood,
In whom all turbulent vices were let loose ;
While conscience, with their impious creed accurst,
Drunk as with wine, had sanctified to them
All bloody, all abominable things.
Thou, Calpe, saw'st their coming ; ancient Rock
Renown'd, no longer now shalt thou be call'd
From gods and heroes of the days of yore,—
Kronos, or hundred-handed Briareus,
Bacchus or Hercules ;—but doom'd to bear
The name of thy new conqueror, and thenceforth
To stand his everlasting monument.
Thou saw'st the dark-blue waters flash before
Their ominous way, and whiten round their keels ;
Their swarthy myriads darkening o'er thy sands.
There on the beach the Misbelievers spread
Their banners, flaunting to the sun and breeze.
Fair shone the sun upon their proud array,—
White turbans, glittering armour, shields engrail'd
With gold, and scimitars of Syrian steel ;
And gently did the breezes, as in sport,
Curl their long flags outrolling, and display
The blazon'd scrolls of blasphemy. Too soon
The gales of Spain from that unhappy land
Wafted, as from an open charnel-house,
The taint of death ; and that bright sun, from fields
Of slaughter, with the morning dew drew up
Corruption through the infected atmosphere." *

* Southey ; Roderic, the last of the Goths.

The invaders landed without opposition. The Visigoths were, probably, too much occupied by intestine dissension to care for what we should call "foreign policy," and were, therefore, ignorant of the true character of the enemy who were coming against them, and of their own imminent peril. Perhaps they despised their numbers, and imagined that these southern strangers would be immediately crushed, as soon as the great, heroic, and victorious race of the Goths appeared on the field of battle. If they entertained such a hope, it was bitterly disappointed. In a preliminary combat, the Saracens scattered the raw levies opposed to them, with their accustomed energy, and the invasion became an accomplished fact. The Gothic king and his people were now thoroughly roused: the signal to arm passed through the land from sea to sea, and an immense host (numbering, perhaps, 100,000 men) was collected at Xeres. But this host was certainly undisciplined; probably ill-armed and worse-handled in the manœuvres which preceded the final conflict. They were opposed by a veteran army, which had swept kingdoms before them, and traversed a whole continent without a check; an army animated by a burning fanaticism, which was something more than valour, and which possessed discipline, arms, and skill in war, such as could not be found in Europe, except, perhaps, among the Frankish bands of Charles Martel. The result may be imagined. The immense body of armed men which had been collected for the defence of Spain, was pierced in all directions by ceaseless charges of the Saracen horse, and hewn in pieces by the Saracen scimitar. The treachery of an archbishop, Oppas, a name infamous in Spanish history, is asserted to have given rise to the triumph of the infidel. Whether this be an historic fact, or a patriotic fiction, invented to palliate a national disgrace, the victory was sudden, bloody, and complete. "Roderic, the last of the Goths," is said to have sought safety in headlong flight from

that fatal field. But he did not live to regenerate his race and restore its destiny. He is generally believed to have perished in the waters of the Guadilquiver, though Spanish romance adorns his subsequent history with mystery and marvels. We may form an acquaintance with the legend from that beautiful but neglected poem in which Southey describes his fate. It is enough for us to know that the Visigoth kingdom was annihilated by this terrible catastrophe. The panic-stricken forces made no attempt to rally, and Tarik found himself master of Toledo without further trouble. His advance was rapid enough to outstrip even the pursuit of envy and malevolence. From the Bay of Biscay to the rock which bears his name, the whole country had submitted to his sword, before Musa, the lieutenant of the Caliph, found time and opportunity to supplant him. Little remained for this unworthy officer to accomplish. A few cities which lay out of his predecessor's line of march had still to be reduced; but they almost immediately capitulated. And now the Saracen deluge covered the face of the whole land, except where, on the summit of the Asturian mountains, reposed the ark of the Christian Faith. The gates of hell had well nigh prevailed against it, but the words of the abiding promise were not to fail. The small band of Christian warriors, who made their home with the wolf and the eagle, formed, amid those inaccessible fastnesses, the germ of a kingdom which was not only to drive the infidel from the Peninsula, but to assert for itself an empire over half the extent of Europe, and the fairest regions of what was then an undiscovered world. Of all this, however, nothing was as yet discernible, when, aroused by a wrong inflicted upon another high-born daughter of the Goths, Pelagius, or Pelayo, descending from the mountain-peaks to avenge the outraged honour of his sister, began that series of unceasing assaults upon the invader which, after continuing for 770 years, terminated in the downfall of

Granada and the expulsion of the last Moor from the soil of Spain. The early chroniclers give an extravagant account of the exploits of Pelayo. They assure us that he overthrew large Moorish armies with tremendous slaughter; but this is the usual mythic tribute to a national hero. A great and politic nation of warriors, like the Saracen conquerors of Spain, would scarcely have neglected to crush a few fugitive enemies had they given such a proof of their capacity for mischief. The struggle of the first Christian chieftains—princes they can hardly with propriety be called—must have resolved itself into that sort of guerilla warfare for which the Asturias and Estremadura have, in after-ages, been renowned. Their title to glory and the gratitude of posterity depends upon the fact, that in its darkest days they did not "despair of the Republic;" that they cherished the expiring flame of patriotism and religion through one of the fiercest storms which ever swept over a nation or a church.

Of the causes which produced or precipitated the Visigoth overthrow, it is needless to speak at length. Something may be assigned to the physical deterioration of a northern race under the enervating influences of the climate and luxurious life of southern Spain. But that this is insufficient to account for such marked inferiority and desperate defeat, is proved by the fortunes of other northern races under similar circumstances; indeed, we require no other example than that of the same race, when its energies had been revived in the hard school of adversity. No soldiers ever merited the praise of gallantry and hardihood for more daring exploits than those of the Cid Campeador and the Christian chivalry who expelled the Moors from Spain. We must, therefore, look rather to social and political causes than to those of a physical character. The internal condition of the Visigoth kingdom, such as it has already been described, will justify us in ascribing to

domestic disorders the easy success of foreign arms. When the Saracens appeared on the horizon, those disorders had reached their climax in the violent feuds of the nobility and clergy, in the disaffection of the Visigoth aristocracy to the reigning house, and in the efforts of the sons of the deposed king to regain their paternal throne. That treachery from the last source co-operated in the fall of Roderic seems certain, from the fact that the Saracens restored to the sons of Witika their private possessions, and even adjudicated upon their rival claims. But in addition to the corruption of the court and the disaffection of the aristocracy, there were probably other causes at work among the population, which contributed to the same result. One of these is so curious and interesting, that we may be excused for dwelling upon it for a moment.

The spirit of persecution which so unhappily distinguished the Spanish church was developed with special intensity and bitterness against the Jews. The fortunes of that favoured yet miserable race form one of the most interesting portions of modern history. It is a tale of strange vicissitudes, sufferings, and triumphs, yet one of which few persons except the professed historical student can be said to know anything. From the eyes of the ordinary readers of history, the Jews disappear from the annals of the world on that memorable day when their city and temple perished by foreign fire and sword, and the terrible voice of the departing Presence proclaimed that the glory of the nation was to pass away along with the protection of Jehovah. But to those more intimately acquainted with mediæval annals, the undying and indestructible people emerge in the records of every Christian city in Europe, and in almost every remarkable scene in her history, under strange alternations of degradation and prosperity. In all those unaccountable and uncontrollable panics which, whether engendered by superstition or calamity, were per-

petually agitating the mediæval mind; in the first advent of the Saracen; in the stormy prelude to the Crusades; in the wars of French and German princes; in the bloody annals of the Spanish Inquisition; in the growth of the Italian cities; in the troubles of our own Plantagenet monarchs, the Jews play a conspicuons and, very often, a most important part. We have only at present to do with the first-mentioned event; but the influence of the Jew in bringing it about cannot be disputed, and ought not to be omitted from our consideration. The politic toleration of the Empire had entered into and inspired the Roman law; and the Jews, satisfied, as we have seen, that the statue of Jove should stand on the Capitol, provided that it was not seen in the streets of Jerusalem, had, with some few exceptions, very generally enjoyed the benefit of the contemptuous indifference of the imperial procurators, who, like Gallio, "cared for none of these things." The Theodosian code did not depart from the spirit of its predecessor. Though it drew a strong line of demarcation between Jew and Christian, it strongly discountenanced persecution. It extended protection to the synagogue and the rabbinical priest, proclaiming the inviolability of the one, and exempting the other from civil and military imposts. Slaves, though of Christian belief, were not emancipated from their Jewish masters. Jewish assemblies were not forbidden. At a later period, in this as in other matters, the great Ostrogoth legislator adopted the principles of the imperial policy, and adhered to the ancient law. Theodoric threw the shield of his protection over the Jews in his empire, and defended them from the animosity of their Christian fellow-subjects. The same course appears to have been followed by his co-religionists the Arian Visigoth princes of Spain. But the great Catholic conversion was followed, as might have been expected, by a strongly-developed impulse of orthodox zeal. The Jews were the first to suffer. It is said that there were

80,000 victims of the first persecution under Sisebert. One of his successors decreed the banishment of the whole race. The canons of the councils of Toledo exhibit no unworthy anticipation of the Inquisition. Spoliation, torture, and death, are everywhere sanctioned and enjoined. The unfortunate children of Abraham were robbed at once of their substance and their faith. Circumcision, the Sabbath, and the Passover, were prohibited; they were even compelled to contaminate themselves with the forbidden thing, and to eat the flesh of swine. To all this there could be but one result,—the common result of all persecution,—detestation of the persecuting authority, and a fixed conviction that any alternative was preferable to submission enforced by such unhallowed means. Such an alternative was not long in offering itself to their choice. The Jew had brethren in many lands. His communications extended from the Syrian cities and the Parthian empire to the remotest districts of Spain and Gaul, and the sympathy produced by common interests, a common faith, and common wrongs, was in his case rendered still more active by a network of commercial transactions, of which, even at that early period, he had nearly secured the monopoly. The Spanish Jews must, therefore, have received early intelligence of that immense movement which had arisen in the East, and was advancing with giant strides along the north of Africa to the Atlantic Ocean. To them the crescent of Islam must indeed have been a star of hope, rising in the eastern heavens, for they had doubtless heard that the fierce warriors who were sweeping on so irresistibly towards their prison-house, themselves also claimed descent from Abraham, and though propagating a new phase of faith, had treated in every land, with the clemency of a kindred race, the scattered children of the Father of the Faithful. Better at any rate, in anticipation, was the supremacy of the Saracen than the heavy and bitter yoke of the Goth. There can be little doubt

but that the Mohammedan invaders were materially aided by intelligence, and still more tangible assistance furnished by the Spanish Jews. The sting of the trampled race inflicted as severe a wound upon the pride and power of the Visigoth monarchy as the degeneracy of the people or the wickedness and incapacity of its rulers. Indeed, we are not left to conjecture. The council of Toledo was summoned to arrest the coming peril, and the king expressly declared, "the sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron and the point of a diamond; they themselves forestall their doom; they plot with the Jews of Africa to shake the foundations of the throne." * Terrible was the penalty proposed. All property proved to belong to a Jew was to be confiscated; every Jewish child above seven years of age was to be torn from its parents, and brought up in the Christian faith. The menace was a vain one. Within fifteen years, the council of Toledo was impotent either to legislate or to strike, and its surviving members hunted fugitives on the Asturian mountains.

One other cause of the utter and ignominious collapse of the Christian power south of the Pyrenees, deserves a moment's attention. The inexperienced student may be inclined to feel some surprise at the apathy of their northern brethren when the fate of the Christian Visigoths hung trembling in the balance, and he perhaps will echo the language of the poet,—

> "Where were thy tears, wide Europe, when the blast
> Of Paynim war o'er those fair regions pass'd?"

But the isolation of the Visigoth monarchy in this perilous crisis will not astonish any one who reflects upon the imperfect state of international relations in that early age, and upon the special local circumstances of the country itself.

* Quoted in an interesting paper upon the Jews of Europe in the Middle Ages: Oxford Essays, 1857.

Many centuries were to elapse ere the nations of Europe could comprehend the effect which they were capable of exercising upon each other, or rise to the conception of one great interest pervading the whole mass. It was this very fact of a struggle against a dangerous power, external and antagonistic to them all, which, perhaps, gave the first idea to the states of Christendom of a common policy and a united action. Yet, notwithstanding the struggles of the knightly orders and the Crusades, half the seventeenth century had elapsed ere the idea bore fruit. Europe looked on apathetic, or appalled, when her dearest interests, perhaps her whole future destiny, hung upon the results of the battle before the walls of Vienna. It was left to the heroic sword of Sobieski to redeem her from a peril which the great monarchs of Europe had either failed to see or did not dare to meet. What wonder, then, if the rude political conceptions of Carlovingians and Lombards were unable to discern that the fortunes of the Visigoths might, possibly, foreshadow their own, and that the battle of the Faith ought to be fought far away, beside the Pillars of Hercules. Isolated in position, Spain was also isolated in action during the earlier centuries of the Christian era. The encircling ocean, and "the long waving line of the blue Pyrenees," from Fontarabia to Perpignan, shut her out from the external world of intrigue and action; and this separation from more stirring social influences and scenes, aggravated, in some degree, the evils incident to a young and semi-barbarian society. Hence her narrow and blind policy, her want of sympathy with the rest of Christendom; and the want of sympathy which the rest of Christendom exhibited towards her in her imminent peril and miserable fall. The same causes have, even in much later times, contributed to produce the same results. But they have been greatly modified by circumstances well known to every student of history. These may be the subject of future consideration: at present, the direct course of

our narrative leads us to consider the origin of that marvellous movement among the Arab tribes which transported them in almost one great impulse from the banks of the Nile to the banks of the Loire; the incidents of its progress, and the character of the people by whom it was brought about. The extent of the inquiry, however briefly conducted, demands more space than can be assigned to it at the close of the present lecture. We shall reserve it for another, and a final one. In the mean time, we may be excused for devoting the remainder of our space to a brief sketch of the circumstances under which the great reaction of the Christians against their conquerors arose, gathered strength, and finally acquired irresistible power. I have said "excused," because the most important part of this heroic story belongs to an era subsequent to the death of Charlemagne, and therefore does not fall within the limits of our present task. The slight transgression, however, of those limits which we shall be compelled to make, will furnish matter useful for future reference, and render more intelligible the state of things we have already attempted to describe.

When in the valley of Canyas, Pelayo set up a standard and beat a drum to summon his followers for a foray against the infidel, he may be regarded as having laid the foundation of a kingdom long one of the greatest and most famous in the world. This kingdom—known originally from its birthplace, as the kingdom of Asturias,—as its limits expanded and its power increased, received the names of Oviedo, Leon, and Castile. M. Augustin Thierry, in a brief historical fragment, has admirably sketched the character of this little society at its origin, and the nature of its progress. As his remarks are very short, I shall make no apology for adopting them:—"Civil war, the consequence and development of conquest, never ceased to agitate the mixed population of Gaul. By a great general disaster, the population of Spain was early united in a common fraternity, confounded in the

same interest, the same sentiment, the same condition, and the same customs. In the year 712 the Arabs took possession of the whole country, except a small desert on the north-west, between the sea and the mountains (the province of the Asturias), the sole habitation left to those who did not acknowledge the right of the conquerors over the dwelling of their ancestors. Confined in that corner of land which became a country for them all,—Goths and Romans, conquerors and conquered, strangers and natives, all united by the same misfortune, forgot their ancient feuds, aversions, and distinctions. There was but one name, one law, one state, one language. All were equal in this exile.

"They descended their steep mountains, and placed the limits of their dwelling in the plains; they built fortresses to insure their progress, and the name of Land of Castles (Castilla) is still preserved by two provinces, which formed, in succession, the frontiers of the reconquered kingdom. To assist them in these expeditions, they made an alliance with the ancient race of inhabitants of the Pyrenees,—a race at all times independent, which had never yielded to the power of the Romans, whose language it never spoke; had never yielded to the ferocious valour of the Franks, whose rear-guard it had crushed at Roncesvalles, and had seen the torrent of the fanatical warriors of the East roar vainly at its feet. This union deprived the Moors, towards the commencement of the twelfth century, of the great cities of Saragossa and Toledo: other cities soon shared the same fate. The grandest part of the history of Spain is the political history of these cities, successively reconquered by the ancient population of the country."

This description applies, in all its main features, to the other Spanish kingdoms of cognate origin; for not from Castile alone has grown up the splendid fabric of Spanish grandeur and Spanish power. Charlemagne had crossed the Pyrenees. The country which stretches from these moun-

tains to the river Ebro, did, undoubtedly, at one time, under the name of the Spanish Marches, form part of his vast and irregular empire. But outlying provinces in the neighbourhood of an ambitious and active enemy, can only be retained by a vigorous exercise of the central administrative power. As long as the great emperor survived, his *missi dominici* may have galloped backwards and forwards between the Ebro and the Rhine, and conveyed the impress of his authority, and the protection of his name, to this remote corner of his dominions. But under his successors, the case was widely different. The feeble Louis could not retain within his grasp other possessions which were much more valuable, and more closely connected with the seat of government. The brave mountaineers, therefore, who dwelt upon both slopes of the Pyrenees, took counsel of themselves, and elected a chief to meet the exigencies of the situation and protect them from their dangerous neighbours. Thus, about a hundred years after the foundation of the first Gothic kingdom, a second arose, to perpetuate the traditions of the nation, and, after playing no mean part in history, under the appellation of Navarre, to give birth to the progenitor of a race of kings once the most conspicuous and the most powerful in the world.

From Navarre, again, was projected an offshoot which soon became greater and stronger than the original stock. This was the kingdom of Aragon. The Aragonese seem to have possessed, from the earliest times, an independent and, it must be confessed, a somewhat stubborn spirit, which repudiated with indignation the pretensions of everything which approached to the assertion of absolute authority. It is not, therefore, probable that they, at any period, lived in very strict submission to the sovereignty of Navarre. The final rupture, however, did not take place till the middle of the eleventh century, when Aragon became an independent state. The peculiar institution of

A.D. 1035.

the Justizia, which recalls to our minds the Spartan Ephoralty, is a strong proof of the spirit which informed them; for it was the especial duty of this officer to judge between the prince and his people, when the latter felt themselves aggrieved. The Aragonese never lost the sturdy republican principles which they inherited from those days when their fathers fought, each on his own responsibility, against the Moors. It was their boast that laws existed before kings, and their oath of allegiance taken to Philip II. pushes constitutional principles quite as far as their most earnest advocate in our own times would be inclined to desire. They take the oath on the understanding that they are as good as he, and shall have more political power, and only accept him as king and seigneur on condition of his protecting their rights and liberties. How far the Aragonese element in the nation may have modified and, in despite of many defeats and discouragements, may still modify the character of the Spanish people and the form of their institutions, is a question deeply interesting to the modern statesman, but one upon which we cannot enter here.

Four years after the separation between Navarre and Aragon, a similar event took place in Castile. Henry of Burgundy, a descendant from the Capetan monarchs of France, and the counts of his own country, had entered Spain at the close of the eleventh century, animated by the spirit of knight-errantry common in that age, and in quest of military adventure and distinction. He became connected by marriage with the great house of Castile, and governed the Lusitanian provinces of that monarchy in the interest of his father-in-law, the Castilian king. His son Alfonso succeeded him as count of Portugal. Those were stirring times. The crusade against the Moors was being carried on with all the energy and excitement which fanaticism, patriotic fervour, and the love of warlike glory could

supply. On the eve of a great expedition against the national enemy, the army of Henry, influenced perhaps by a dream which he related to them, or, at any rate, with imaginations strongly worked upon by the solemnity of the occasion, formally saluted him as their king. This was the origin of the little kingdom of Portugal, the only one among the early Spanish states which resisted the strong attraction of political cohesion, and has continued to maintain its independence. The result is to be attributed to the valour and policy of those wise and able monarchs who presided over its destinies during the first two centuries of its existence.

A.D. 1139.

The internal condition of the Spanish monarchies was determined by the circumstances under which they grew up. We have seen how M. Thierry has described these circumstances; we will also avail ourselves of the language of the same great authority to present, as the closing picture of our lecture, an eloquent sketch of their social and political results. "The equality which reigned in the patriotic armies of the Asturias and of Leon could not perish by victory; they were perfectly free men, who occupied the houses and ramparts deserted by the flight of the enemy; they were perfectly free men, who became burgesses and citizens. Urban and rural property established no distinction of rank among men. Rank or personal consideration did not pass from the possessor to the domain; and no domain was able to communicate to him who obtained it, as his share, power over lands or men. No one could demand from another anything besides his legitimate rights: no one could take from the hands of another the weapons they had borne together. Thus, the man of the fortress and the man of the city, the lord of the manor and the peasant, equally free in their various possessions, lived as friends, and not as enemies. It was not that men were better in those countries than elsewhere; it was because everything was established there on

a groundwork of primitive equality and fraternity; whilst, in the neighbouring countries, the main point of revolutions, on the contrary, was the basis of an absolute inequality impressed on the soil by the footstep of conquest, and degrading itself little by little, yet unable to become totally effaced.

"Every city repeopled by Christians became a commune, that is to say, a sworn association under freely-elected magistrates: all this sprung without an effort, without a dispute, from the simple effect of the occupation of the city. The citizens had nothing to pay beyond the civil contribution; they had no obligation beyond that of maintaining their society and defending its territory. They had to rally in times of common danger round the supreme chief of the country; each one came at the summons, to place himself under the banners of his commune and leaders of his own choice. Whoever possessed a war-horse and armour of a horseman, was exempted, for this service, from the contribution of war; the others paid a moderate duty: thus, the population was divided in the language into *horsemen* and *taxables:* this distinction, in fact, was the only one. The influence of foreign customs added to it later rights, which were not derived thence.

"The chiefs, settled in vast territories for the care of the general defence, likewise founded towns, by calling into an inclosure, protected by their fortresses, the Christians escaped from the Moorish country, and those who had no certain abode. Here there were treaties, contracts, and charters, which expressed the rights of the future city, and stipulated the price of land for whoever should make it his dwelling. The charter bound for ever, or until a new agreement, the citizens and their sons, as well as the sons of him who had founded the commune; the cities possessed round them vast portions of land, which submitted to their municipal jurisdiction; their power of *justice* extended to the castles, which received instead of granting it. There were no various

ranks or servile labours for the workmen. It seemed as if all those who had reconquered their native land were sacred to one another: mutual respect, mutual pride, protected them; and the traces of this noble character are to be met with in the present day in the pride of the peasant of Castile."*

* Augustin Thierry, *ut supra.*

LECTURE XI.

ARABIA—MOHAMMED—ISLAMISM—THE SARACENS.

"For the Eastern world, it is, I suppose, generally acknowledged that we ought to regard Mahometanism as having had, no less than Judaism, a place, though doubtless a very different place, in the determinate counsels of God."—GLADSTONE'S *Homer*, vol. ii. p. 523.

"De Arabia la feliz vino al mundo la mayor infelicidad que jamas padecio en lo temporal y espiritual."—*Coronica de los Moros de España*, por el Padre Presentado FRAY JAYME BLEDA.

SYNOPSIS.—The Arab character affected by locality and race.—The Saracens described by Ammianus Marcellinus.—Ancient commerce passed through Arabia.—Brigandage.—Poetry.—Religion.—Meeting of Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity in the Peninsula.—The nature of the doctrine proclaimed by Mohammed; his personal character.—The progress of Islamism not more wonderful than its origin; the reasons why it so entirely extirpated other religions.—The birth of Mohammed; his flight from Mecca; his conquests and his death.—The succeeding Khalifs.—The Ommiades.—The Abassides.—Foreign conquests of the Khalifate; their several stages.—The Khalifs triumph over the Greek emperor; over the Persian Sassanides; make themselves masters of North Africa; pass over into Spain.—Permanent results of the Civilization which they introduced into Europe.

THE origin and growth of that most startling of all religious and historical phenomena, the faith and victory of Islam, is only connected incidentally with European history and the scope of these Lectures. The story is a strange one; brilliant, startling, and most interesting. But we need not elaborately repeat it here, for it is far more familiar to the ordinary reader than the obscurer tale of Hunnish or

Vandal adventure; and it has been fully given in the greatest historical work of our literature. The illustrious author of the "Decline and Fall," influenced, perhaps, by a somewhat equivocal motive, has put forth his whole strength upon the narrative. Some of the opinions, indeed, which it contains are not likely to command the sympathy of his readers at the present hour, when even those who share the writer's latent dislike to Christianity, are disposed to assail its defences from another stand-point. But, idle as well as arrogant would be the attempt to rival the luminous arrangement and vivid colouring of that pictured page. The masterpiece of Gibbon, spite of its defects, will probably never be superseded; and we must refer all who desire a larger acquaintance with the subject than can be derived from our own meagre sketch, to the celebrated chapters which contain an account of Mohammed, his country, his religion, and his people. We cannot, however, in pursuance of our purpose, dispense with a few remarks upon the nature of that great national movement which projected Asia upon Europe, and upon the secondary or concurring causes which promoted its success.

I am far from asserting that these causes, as they are generally conceived, or as I shall represent them, constitute a sufficient account of the matter. On the contrary, something deeper than all secondary causes lies at the root of the Divine dispensations; and that something it is seldom given to us to detect. In the present instance, there was a power assuredly working upon the minds of men,—a moral lever, so to speak, upheaving the old-world order of things,—greater and more wonderful than anything which the mere historian's eye can detect in the external aspects of human nature and human society. To the theologian belongs what amount of speculation on the hidden councils and the secret operations of Providence is permitted to our imperfect intelligence. We shall address ourselves to a less-

exalted task, and reserve the few remarks which it is our duty to make upon the higher subject, until that task has been concluded.

Race and locality are, as we have seen in a former lecture,* among the most powerful of those influences which act upon national character. The people who first accepted the religious system of Mohammed, and carried his victorious standard over Asia, Africa, and Europe, were subjected to both these influences in a very remarkable way. Their race was Semitic; their dwelling-place was the Arabian peninsula. Arabia, from its position and physical conformation, enjoyed a larger exemption from the inroad of foreign arms than any other portion of the Old world. Situated between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, connected with Africa only by a narrow isthmus, and with Asia by a frontier most unfavourable for military operations, it would scarce have offered available means of access to the invader, even had its internal situation been such as to tempt his cupidity. But this was far from being the case. A waste of sand and rock, burning, to borrow the Scripture imagery, like molten iron beneath a firmament of brass, and often engulfing caravans and even armies beneath its treacherous surface, and a wild nomad race, who wandered to and fro over a pathless desert, and vanished from view as the enemy appeared on the horizon, offered none of the usual inducements which tempt the avarice or ambition of great conquerors and their invading hosts. The long streaks of scanty pasturage which gleamed upon the slopes of the mountains, running parallel to the two gulfs; the vine or palm, which here and there had been planted, by human labour, beside the wild tamarind and acacia, the only natural products of that arid land; the few rude horse-hair huts, which might be pitched on the morrow a hundred miles away;—these were not treasures to tempt the grasping genius of Assyrian

* Lecture III.

or Persian kings. Where conquest was so difficult, and the results of conquest of such little value, it is not surprising that it was seldom attempted with success. National independence has ever been a characteristic of the race, concerning whose great progenitor it was proclaimed, by the Divine voice, that he would be a wild man, whose hand should be against every man, and every man's hand against him.* Gibbon, as ever, has attempted to elude the force of the prophetic evidence which the history of the Arabian peninsula affords; but he is constrained to admit that the instances of foreign occupation have been temporary or local, and that the arms of Sesostris and Cyrus, of Pompey and Trajan, could never achieve the conquest of Arabia. Even the all-conquering hand of Rome was laid but lightly upon this intractable race and inaccessible land. The Roman bard who most loudly proclaims his country's triumphs in her palmiest days, tells us also of the "inviolate treasures of Arabia," and the "unconquered Sabean kings."† A few not very important possessions, and some naval inroads of Trajan, were, as Gibbon admits, what history and medals magnified into the Roman conquest of Arabia. In this, therefore, as in so many other instances, locality exercised a powerful influence upon national character and national history. The Arabs were the wild people of a rugged land, and such has been the account which tradition has consistently given of them. Here is the description of Ammianus Marcellinus, a very graphic, and, we may be sure, authentic description; for that stout old soldier had seen and fought with them, much, apparently, to his own disgust. It will be observed that he speaks of them as Saracens; an appellation under which were confounded, by the Greeks and Latins, all the Arabian tribes from Mecca to the Euphrates. "The Saracens, whose friendship and hostility were to us alike

* Gen. xvi. 12. † Hor. Od. I. xxix. 3.

undesirable, rushing hither and thither, plundered in a moment whatever they could lay their hands on; just like a band of rapacious kites, who, when they catch a glimpse of their prey, swoop down upon it like lightning, and are off in a moment if they miss their mark. Among these tribes, which extend from Assyria to the cataracts of the Nile and the confines of the Blemmyæ, all are alike warriors, and half-naked, their only covering being a coloured cloak reaching to the loins. By the help of their swift horses, and camels of active frame, in peace and war alike, they scour the whole country, to its most opposite limits. No man among them ever puts his hand to the plough, plants a tree, or seeks a livelihood by cultivating the soil. They wander everlastingly over regions lying far and wide apart, without a home, without fixed settlements or laws. The same clime [*cœlum*] never contents them long, nor are they ever satisfied with the occupation of a single district. Their life is one perpetual motion. Their wives they take on hire, and keep with them for a time fixed by previous agreement; and as this is a sort of wedlock, the bride brings to her future master a spear and a tent, with the privilege of leaving him after some specified day, should such be her pleasure. The licentious passion of both sexes is incredible. So wide are their wanderings, and so uninterrupted throughout their whole lives, that a woman weds in one spot, gives birth to her child in another, and brings up her family far away from either, without ever being permitted to enjoy an opportunity of rest. All, without exception, live upon the flesh of wild animals: they have milk in abundance for their support, vegetables of all sorts, and such birds as they are enabled to capture by fowling. The majority of them we have seen to be entirely ignorant of the use of corn and wine. Thus much of this pernicious race of people."* Such were the race who furnished the

* Ammianus Marçellinus, lib. xiv. § iv. 1.

material for Mohammed's great religious experiment. Who does not recognize in this portrait of them, drawn long before his birth, the features of those fiery warriors who raised his standard against the world, and galloped their untiring steeds over all the country between the Punjab and the gates of Toulouse?

These national characteristics, as Ammianus has depicted them, afford some clue to the problem which is involved in the marvellous success of the Mohammedan invasions. But, as we have said, they did not arise from locality alone. Race contributed its share to the result, and circumstance modified it, determining the direction of energies which might, under external influences of another kind, have worked out very different results. A certain fixedness of resolve, a strength of will degenerating into stiff-neckedness and obstinacy, united to a warm and brilliant, though limited imagination, seems to mark the Semitic mind. This power of purpose, united to an imaginative tendency, has perpetually proved itself capable of engendering a religious exaltation, which in its most favourable development becomes a fervent and operative faith, but which may equally break forth into that terrible fanaticism which is more irresistible than fire and steel. The qualities for which the Jew was selected by the wisdom of Jehovah to be the keeper and champion of his law, and to uplift his standard against an idolatrous world, were found perhaps as strongly marked in his kinsman the Semitic Arab. The same scorn of the stranger, the same indomitable zeal and national pride, the same headlong faith, which, regardless of human chances, stormed the strongholds of Phœnician giants and trampled on the necks of Canaanitish kings, were shown in after-years, by the invincible zealots who scourged alike the Persian, the Greek, the Roman, the Visigoth, and the Frank, and shouted the watchword of the Prophet before the walls of Damascus, Constantinople, Alexandria, Toledo, and Tours.

Such being the influences of locality and race upon the Arab mind, it was natural enough that the nation should exhibit an inclination and aptitude for military adventure. The inherent obstinacy and pride of the people, fostered by an almost unbroken tradition of independence, gave them the spirit of self-confidence which is the surest presage of victory; the discipline of desert life added the hardihood and activity which enabled them to overcome obstacles that must have proved insuperable to more organized armies. But other influences, as we have said, contributed their share to the same result, and greatly augmented the force of the original impulse by which these isolated bands of herdsmen and shepherds were projected upon the external world. The situation of the Arabian peninsula, owing to the dangers of the Red-Sea navigation, made it the great thoroughfare for the commerce of the ancient world. The treasures of India and Abyssinia were transported in Arabian caravans; the corn of Mesopotamia, the steel of Damascus, the pearls of the Persian Gulf, gems from the Indian mountains, the gums and aromatics of the seaboard of the Southern Ocean, daily passed before the eyes of the children of Ismael. The wild man's hand might occasionally aid in the labours of commerce, but his heart, like that of his progenitor, was set on rapine and on war. It would have been strange had he neglected such brilliant opportunities. "The innumerable tribes of this nation," says Pliny,* "are equally divided between brigandage and trade." The national instinct, fostered and developed by the force of circumstance, became a powerful auxiliary to schemes of ambition and territorial conquest. A race of robbers readily obeyed the call which summoned them to the plunder of the world.

We should, however, do injustice to the Arab character, and greatly obscure our view of the true causes of Arab conquest, did we not admit that something more than the mere

* Hist. Nat. vi. 32.

force of predatory habits, something higher than a mere barbaric lust for blood and gold, animated and supported those immense undertakings which cast into shadow all the exploits of the other adversaries of the Roman empire and the Christian church.

The sentiment of military glory is to be found among the savage aborigines who go out against their enemies, as against the beasts of the field, with clubs, and arrows tipped with fish-bones or flint. Something more, however, is required before this sentiment can assume the strength or importance which would justify us in classifying it among the influences which mould the character of a people, and determine the direction of its powers. It is the "sacer vates" who gives the sentiment permanence and weight, not only, or principally, when he appears as the Homeric rhapsodist or Runic bard, but also when his functions are discharged by the varied literature of a cultivated age. There can be no doubt but that this influence existed, and acted powerfully among the Arab race. A strong, though somewhat sterile imagination,—sterile, that is to say, rather from the want of variety than of vigour, is a marked characteristic of the people among whom arose

"The Man of Uz, the morning star of Song."

The earliest poetry of the world pours from the lips of Elihu and Job. The profane muse has never soared in so high a flight as the soul of the inspired penman, whose strains were most probably meditated in the broad star-lit solitudes of the Arabian desert. "The vision and the faculty divine" did not fade from the mind and memory of his descendants. A fraternity of bards, with the usual accompaniment of public recitations and contests of excellence, appears to have existed among the Arab tribes as among those of Northern Europe. The most distinguished and successful of these compositions were inscribed upon linen and letters of gold,

and suspended in the national temple of the Caaba. Gibbon has told us, with his usual magniloquence: "The arts of grammar, of metre, and of rhetoric, were unknown to the freeborn eloquence of the Arabians; but their penetration was sharp, their fancy luxuriant, their wit strong and sententious, and their more elaborate compositions addressed with energy and effect to the mind of their hearers."* The subjects, however, of these southern rhapsodists were somewhat less diversified than those of their European brethren. Love and war are, among all men, people, and languages, the perennial founts of song; but their illustration is suggested and limited by the aspects of external nature. The boundless sands, the burning sky, the green oases which spread a carpet of emerald verdure beneath the shade of stately palms, the gush of waters glittering like the diamond, the graceful gazelle, and the noble steed, whose neck is clothed with thunder, and who neighs amid the trumpets of battle, formed the stock of imagery under which they represented the gentle or terrible emotions of the human heart. And if it should seem to us that these topics do not constitute a very large repertory for a poetic literature, we find that one of the national bards, Antar, a contemporary of the Prophet, was himself oppressed by the same conviction. "What subject," he complains, "now remains unsung?"—the "omnia jam vulgata" of the poet of another and an effete age. Yet perhaps this very coincidence between a large poetic literature and a strong poetic feeling, on the one part, and an exhaustion of the material of poetic sentiment on the other, may have tended to act upon the Arab imagination, and propel it onward in a course which opened out to view long vistas of enterprise and renown. Be this as it may, the fact that there existed among the Arabs, in the days of their famous leader, something like a recognized literature to record the hero's renown, and stimulate the

* Decline and Fall, ch. ii.

valour of the people, elevates their exploits beyond mere brigandage and bloodshed, while it helps to account for the vigour and pertinacity with which they were pursued.

But whatever may have been the influence thus exercised, it is to the state of religion that we must look for the cause most likely to strengthen or counteract it; and this is more particularly true in reference to a revolution excited by an appeal to religious instincts, and developed in a religious form. It must appear to the thoughtful student of history, probable, *à priori*, that such a revolution would be preceded by a strange condition of belief and worship, in the country where it so suddenly triumphed; and such was the fact. A grovelling idolatry, confused and contradictory, without the grace of Greece or the subtle symbolism of Egypt, had long been the autochthonous worship of the Arabian peninsula. Three hundred and sixty idols of men or brute animals were ranged along the walls of the Caaba, when Mohammed proclaimed, in that great national temple, the unity of God. Each probably represented a superstition prevailing in some particular tribe, and accepted with comprehensive indifference within the walls of the sacred edifice, which contained the black stone supposed to have fallen from heaven. The mystic stone so long worshipped at Mecca, a black quadrangular block, was probably a relic of the rudest Fetishism; and if we are to believe the passionate reproaches of some ancient authorities, the most horrid rites of human sacrifice annually defiled the national altars. But it was not simply upon the ruins of this ignorance and brutality that the faith of Islam arose. Just as these idolatrous cults were becoming effete, further impulse was given to scepticism and confusion, by the contradictory action of the three, or rather the four, great religions then existing in the world, which had by this time approached Arabia from different quarters. Sabaism,—the worship of Sabaoth, or the host of heaven, had lingered on in the East,

even after the downfall of Babylon and the persecution of the astronomers of Chaldæa. The Persian Magi had in their turn succumbed to the Macedonian sword, and the professors of both religions found their way to the comparative freedom of Arabia and its deserts. To a certain extent Arabia had always been regarded as a kindred country by the Jews. A considerable remnant escaped thither after the Roman wars, and the great and terrible day of Jerusalem. With the facility of their race, they soon struck root in the new land, mingled in its commercial dealings, built synagogues in its cities, and aspired to convert its sons to the faith of Abraham. Christianity too had its representatives among this motley assemblage. It penetrated thither from Byzantine Greece, from Alexandria, and from the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia. The Christians of the latter country had been induced by the emperor Justin I. to establish their religion in Arabia by force of arms. The attempt met only with a temporary and partial success. It was enough, however, to create, among a fiery and patriotic people, a feeling of impatient dislike towards a foreign faith thus arbitrarily thrust upon them, while it could not but communicate to them some of its grandest and most vivifying ideas. But the weakness of Christianity more especially lay in the fact, that its intestine dissensions had projected many of the warring parties beyond the boundaries of the Roman empire, and that these rival sects met and battled in Arabia, as in an arena open to all. "The Marcionites and Manichæans," says Gibbon, "dispersed their *phantastic* opinions and apocryphal gospels; the churches of Yemen, and the princes of Hira and Gossan, were instructed in a purer creed, by the Jacobite and Nestorian bishops."* It was, indeed, one of the darkest periods of the Christian church; speculation and practice were alike corrupt, and the mingled evils of worldly ambition, false philosophy, sectarian virulence, and sensual

* Decline and Fall, ch. i.

living, were well nigh victorious over the blood of martyrs, the wisdom and piety of the great men who here and there ministered at her altars, and the burning zeal, too often degenerating into fanaticism and folly, which animated a certain class of her children. Those who believe in "the soul of goodness," which, even in the worst and darkest times, dwells in the institutions of the Church, redeeming her from ultimate degradation, and justifying to after-ages the promise of her Divine Founder, will not be led away by eloquent generalities, into the conviction that she was ever abandoned to utter and irredeemable corruption. They will hesitate to accept, without modification, the language of a writer, once of considerable repute, and may perhaps regard with some impatience the trenchant style which found favour with the divines of the last century. Here, however, is the description given by a Bampton lecturer, of the condition of the Christian church at the time when she should have arisen in her strength, and done battle with the rival faith, which was to shake the world. "If, in surveying the history of the sixth and seventh centuries, we call to our remembrance that purity of doctrine, that simplicity of manners, that spirit of meekness and universal benevolence, which marked the character of the Christian in the apostolic age, the dreadful reverse which we here behold, cannot but strike us with astonishment and horror. Divided into numberless parties, on account of distinctions the most trifling and absurd; contending with each other from perverseness, and persecuting each other with rancour; corrupt in opinion and degenerate in practice, the Christians of this unhappy period seem to have retained little more than the name and external profession of their religion. Of a Christian church, scarce any vestige remained. The most profligate principles and absurd opinions were universally predominant; ignorance amidst the most favourable opportunities of knowledge, vice amidst the noblest encourage-

ments to virtue; a pretended zeal for truth, mixed with the wildest extravagances of error; an implacable spirit of discord about opinions which none could settle; and a general and striking similarity in the commission of crimes, which it was the duty and interest ofall to avoid!"*

Possibly we shall agree to hope, to believe, that there is much exaggeration here. Yet the fact remains. The great image of the Catholic church, overlaid with vain ceremonial, darkened by the clouds and shadows of oriental mysticism, distorted by western ambition, and shattered by internal strife, no longer presented to the world that sublime aspect which won unwittingly the eyes and hearts of men, and banished, for a time, all other religious institutions and forms of faith beyond the horizon of their vision. It was then, with this strange congeries of error, superstition, and ignorance, that Mohammed had to deal, and he brought to the task a wonderfully perspicacious and subtle genius. Perhaps also, in the first instance, he may have been actuated by a sincere, and though a mistaken, yet excusable conviction, of the necessity for a great religious reformation among a people of degraded life and contradictory creeds.

The unscrupulous syncretism of the old idolatry, partly disturbed and partly enlightened by the admixture of other forms of belief, formed a most appropriate soil upon which to plant a fresh religious system. The experiment could hardly fail to be successful, when the new faith eliminated the old sources of weakness, while, on the other hand, it assimilated to itself those principles in the rival religions which it found to be most vigorous, and carefully suited its teaching and requirements to the predominant instincts of those to whom it was proclaimed. This is precisely what Islamism did. It swept away the old brutish idolatry; it seized upon the salient features of

* White's Bampton Lectures for 1784; Sermon ii. p. 61.

Judaism and Christianity, and rejecting what was repugnant to the natural tendencies of the human heart, cut short all difficulties, either of speculation or practice, by the bold declaration of "*an eternal truth and a necessary fiction*" —"there is but one God, and Mohammed is his prophet." This truth is asserted in a way well adapted to satisfy the aspirations of the natural intellect, disgusted by the grossness or confusions of the traditions by which it was surrounded, yet with such bare and logical strictness, so coldly and imperfectly, that it could not co-exist for a moment in the same mind with the verities of the Christian faith, notwithstanding its hollow professions of a spiritual alliance. It is said that Mohammed was assisted in the composition of the Koran by a Nestorian monk and a Syrian Jew.* The story is doubtless false; yet, like many historical fictions, it veils and conceals a truth. The impostor evidently attempted a combination of the two dispensations in his own person, partly in order to obtain the support of existing religious traditions for his own system, and partly to attract the professors of both creeds, by an apparent recognition of their spiritual rights. Nor was he altogether unsuccessful. He taught his followers that the Jews, with whom he claimed a common origin from Abraham, were to be regarded in a very different light from other unbelievers; and we have seen that, in an evil hour for Europe,† the Jews returned the favour by sympathy, and perhaps support. By all, however, who really deserved the Christian name, his advances were rejected with contempt. Even while admitting the abstract proposition which forms the basis of Islamism,—the unity of God, the Christian was obliged to introduce modifying statements, which at once cut him off from all communion with the new creed; and when he advanced beyond the region of abstract propositions, and entered upon the sphere of practical morality, the divergence became wider still. *His*

* Gibbon, Decline and Fall, ch. i. † Lecture X.

morality was based upon a Divine Example, and consisted in the imitation of a Divine Person, the concrete image of the Son of God, who was also Son of Man. This morality, therefore, required self-sacrifice, purity, goodness, and truth in the inward parts; a renunciation of the instincts of the natural man, and a new birth of the soul into another life. The morality of Islam was entirely subservient to its temporal objects: it was constructed upon the accommodating principle so keenly ridiculed by our great English satirist, of compounding for the sins to which it was inclined, by condemning those to which it had no mind.* Contrast the conclusion of the Christian's course, unto which he is to attain, purified by resistance to temptation, by the denial of the natural desires, and the exaltation of his soul to a capacity for spiritual enjoyment, with the paradise, "earthly and of the earth," in which the followers of Islam are to find the reward of their virtues and the perfection of their being. The green oasis, consecrated to sensual joys, which awaits the true believer beyond the arch of Al-Sirat; the jewelled pavilions rising in groves of shady verdure; the crystal rivers coursing over beds of amber; the silks, the perfumes, the flowers, the exquisite viands, the carpets of brilliant dyes, upon which recline the dark-eyed and immortal daughters of Paradise, are evidence enough of the truths and duties which the morality of Mohammed avoided, of the illegitimate fascinations which it supplied, of the causes which prevented the rejection of his mission, and contributed to its success. The morality which depends upon the mutual relations of the sexes, the bond of family life and the basis of national greatness, he systematically violated both by precept and example; for, according to the testimony of all ancient authors, it would have cost him a bitter struggle to enforce it upon the peculiar temperament of his people. Drunkenness, the besetting sin of the Northern races, to which, however, there are less seductive

* Butler's Hudibras.

temptations in the arid countries parched by a southern sun, he strongly discouraged and forbade, for drunkenness would have destroyed the discipline of his armies, and impaired the vigour of their physical powers. The Prophet, again, who bears a message from heaven, upon which depends the salvation of men, may indeed be fanatic and uncompromising in the means by which he attempts to force it upon their acceptance: still it is with him the one thing paramount; to this all other considerations are postponed, all other interests yield. Mohammed professed that it was his mission to combat for the conversion of the nations. "Believe or die, the Koran or the Sword," was, upon his own principles, the only alternative which he had a right to propose. Yet the vanquished, upon payment of tribute, were permitted to retain their creed;—in other words, were permitted to purchase from the Prophet of God the eternal perdition of their souls. Nor do these exhaust the instances in which it is possible to discern the clever accommodation of his teaching to the circumstances of his time. Pride and superstition were the predominant characteristics of the Arab race. To their pride he appealed, as an Arab of the Arabs, the purest blood of their land, of the family of Hashem, of the tribe of Koreish, "the princes of Mecca, the hereditary guardians of the Caaba." For their superstition he provided, by retaining, with little change, the mysterious rites, the invocations, the prostrations, the pilgrimages to sacred spots, the adoration of the mystic black stone, which formed part of the ancient idolatry. Indeed, after his death, the Caaba became the object of more fanatic reverence than heretofore, while honours no less idolatrous were offered to his own tomb. But, as has been said, "he had philosophy for the wise as well as superstition for the vulgar." The great questions which have agitated the human mind, speculations about the nature of God, the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, with the unsolved, and perhaps insoluble ques-

tions of "fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute," employed the early Mohammedan doctors, and redeemed the religion, in the eyes of men of higher intelligence, from the not unreasonable charge of being little more than an accommodation to the blind instincts of an incurious multitude.

It is a favourite opinion, that the progress of Islamism, and its permanence, constitute a much more marvellous phenomenon than its birth. But if the considerations upon which we have dwelt in any respect explain its origin, they also account for its growth. It would be more marvellous if the power and prestige of success, the stability which waits upon "the accomplished fact," the splendid advantages offered to its professors by a triumphant faith, which was making the tour of the civilized world, had not tended to strengthen and consolidate the religious system which the genius of the Arab prophet had summoned up in obedience to the spirit of the age. As well might we marvel that the avalanche, when once launched from the mountain-peak, should gather strength and volume in its fall. The Koran declared war against mankind, and by precept, menace, and exhortation, hurled its followers, sabre in hand, against the whole human race. Before them were the gates of Paradise; behind them, the fires of Hell. The impulse was irresistible. Who could stay that roaring torrent in its path, and, when it had swollen to a mighty river, roll back its waves to the narrow limits of the desert oasis where it first sprung to light? In Egypt, in Syria, and in Spain, it would be easy to point out secondary causes, existing in the social condition of those countries, which contributed, in no mean degree, to the success of the Saracen arms. But these were unimportant compared with the one great cause,—a disciplined fanaticism stimulated by victory and strengthened by the acquisitions of conquest. Such success has a natural tendency to reproduce, and, for a time, perpetuate itself; for among the millions whom it attracted, who were calm, or

wise, or instructed enough to question evidence which came before them in such a form? And when once the fact of conquest had been accomplished; when the faith of Islam had taken root in the minds of the rude populations whom it subdued; when its material splendours, backed by a strong and visible power of the sword, were before their eyes; when its exclusive institutions shut them out from all external influences of laws, learning, or civilization,—where was the sceptic or reformer likely to arise who should cast all this from himself and the hearts of his people, and revolutionize the aspects of the world? Such deeds—nay, the very conception of such deeds—were assuredly not for that age of human history. On the contrary, from the very nature of the case and the necessity of things, the creed of Islam, when once accepted, could not be cast aside; and, for a time, each generation succumbed more entirely to its influence than the generation that preceded them. It has been well said, in reference to this very subject, by a living ornament of our church: "There are few opinions, or forms of belief, to which men may not, sincerely as well as in pretence, become attached, provided they be frequently and in any striking manner set before them; and their assent to these will be easier and more fixed in proportion as the grounds of the belief itself become more obscured by the lapse of time, and, as it were, merged in those accidents and circumstances which at once keep out of sight, and vouch for the existence of some foundation for themselves, and the creed to which they belong."*

One concurring cause of the large success of Islamism remains to be noticed,—the personal character of its author. On this, as on some other kindred topics, the language of the last century would scarcely be accepted now. We may not share Mr. Emerson's hero-worship for the representative men of the world's history, or echo his opinion, that

* The Bishop of St. Helena; Oxford Essay.

colossal theologies are the necessary and structural action of the human mind, and assign to Mohammed the place of master-architect in the vast system which bears his name; yet we shall not, on the other hand, resolve the whole matter into a delusion and a cheat, and consider that we have sufficiently described its author, by adopting such well-worn phrases as the "Arabian Impostor," the "artful Prophet of Mecca," and the like. We accept the language of the great living statesman prefixed to the present Lecture. It is in accordance with justice and truth, to admit that Mohammed was one of those great men raised up to a great work, who, while we contemplate the firmament of the ages, flash, from time to time, across our field of view. The words of M. Guizot, when speaking of the agencies which have wrought out modern civilization, are probably familiar to our ears. "There is a fourth cause of civilization," he says, "a cause which it is impossible to appreciate fitly, but which is not, therefore, the less real, —and this is the appearance of great men. No one can say why a great man appears at a certain epoch, and what he adds to the development of the world. That is a secret of Providence; but the fact is not, therefore, less certain. There are men whom the spectacle of anarchy and social stagnation strikes and revolts; who are intellectually shocked therewith, as with a fact which ought not to exist, and are possessed with an unconquerable desire of changing it,—a desire of giving some rule, somewhat of the general, regular, and permanent, to the world before them; —a terrible, and often tyrannical power, which commits a thousand crimes, a thousand errors,—for human weakness attends it; a power, nevertheless, glorious and salutary, for it gives to humanity, and with the hand of man, a vigorous impulse forward,—a mighty movement."* Something, then, must be attributed to the nature of the man himself. But

* Guizot, History of Civilization

with what exact object, and in what exact way, he exercised his influence, it is not so easy to determine. Probably he was as little of a mere enthusiast as of a mere impostor. Gifted with a wonderful genius for organization, and with strong religious instincts, his soul may have been hot within him when he saw the vile abominations of the national idolatry, and the hopeless social antagonism of the Arab tribes. If he looked abroad for a remedy, it was natural to seek it in the foreign religious systems which had introduced themselves into his country. Yet how could a spirit like his throw itself heartily into the Christianity of that age and place? The cry of unceasing theological strife, and the idle babble of philosophical speculation so called, must have been utter weariness and sickness of soul to a man of that fiery and practical temperament. He seems, therefore, to have fallen back upon Judaism, and adopted so much of its doctrine and practice as he knew were suited to the revolution which he meditated. His approximations to Christianity were trifling; just enough to enlarge the basis of his religious system and conciliate some opposition. It is not likely that his original design extended beyond the introduction of political order among the Arabian tribes, and a reformation of the grosser elements and attributes of their worship. This he may have considered himself divinely commissioned to accomplish. But success brought with it other and more ambitious aims: it entirely changed the nature of his sentiment toward the outer world. The most superficial inspection of the Koran will show that in the earlier stages of his career he contemplated friendly relations with foreign nationalities of another faith. War against the human race, death to the unconverted, and Islamism for the world, were only conceived by the Prophet, and proclaimed to his followers, when the marvellous success of his arms enlarged his ambition and inflamed his religious zeal. At what particular period, and whether by any self-

conscious process or no, the honest enthusiast passed into the deluder and conqueror of the ordinary type, it is impossible for human judgment to decide; for it is not before the tribunal of human judgment that the question shall be tried.

Finally, it has been asked, why was the triumph of the Mohammedan religion as complete as that of the Saracen arms? Conquest does not always, or necessarily, imply conversion. On the contrary, many instances will recur to the recollection of every one, where the victorious and dominant race have either adopted the religion of the vanquished or failed to impress their own upon them. This was not the case with the religion of Mohammed. In Syria, in Africa, to a certain extent in Spain itself, the population, in a few years, professed the faith of their conquerors, and the national cults died out. Why was this? Why were those naked locust-eaters enabled to produce a result in the South, which the scarcely more barbarous tribes of the North—the Huns, the Vandals, and the Goths—never produced in the slightest degree? Why were the latter subdued by the religion of the nation whose armies they had themselves subdued, while the faith of the former was as victorious as their sword, banishing the philosophical theism of Zoroaster from the great empire of Persia, and trampling out Christianity in the countries of Origen, Augustine, and Isidore? The answer is undoubtedly to be found, to some extent, in the inherent strength of the principle they proclaimed, as contrasted with the internal strife of the Christian world, the prevalence of pernicious heresies, like that of the Monophysites in Egypt, and the dreamy, unpractical, unwarlike character impressed upon the Christian populations of the South and East, by the eremite and monastic theory of the Christian life which was then almost universally held, and very widely practised. But, concurring with these, there was another cause in operation, which must not be for-

gotten. When the Northern barbarian quitted the Asiatic steppes or the Scandinavian peninsula, he came southward in a complete migration, like the Roman, "cum prole matronisque nostris," or like the Israelites under Moses, "with their young and with their old, with their sons and with their daughters, with their flocks and with their herds." The consequence was, that he brought a whole society with him; and this society, by the very fact of its coherence in the new land where it had come to dwell, left an understructure of the old inhabitants, who preserved their own domestic ties, their social habits, and to a certain extent, the institutions more intimately connected with them. These institutions, therefore, had an opportunity of being brought face to face with those of the conquering race. There was room for contact and comparison, and, therefore, for the eventual triumph of truth. But the Arab went forth a warrior and a fanatic, with the sabre in the one hand and the Koran in the other. He meant to conquer and to destroy, not to emigrate. "Fight, fight!—Paradise, paradise!" was the battle-cry he was taught to raise, whatever might be the foe before him, and death to the male population was the strict corollary of the doctrine that brought him into the field. But his fiery temperament, the permission of polygamy, the promises and practice of the Prophet, all tended to the absorption of the whole female population into the camp of the victors. The unfortunate daughters of Persia, Africa, and Spain, crowded the harems of the invincible Arabs. The conquered peoples, stripped of their wives and daughters by the sword, and indisposed to contract domestic ties, from the pressure of utter poverty, and in some cases, from the prevalence of monasticism and the monastic spirit, gradually faded and died out. And even where the female captives did not apostatize to the religion of their masters, they were compelled to behold their children brought up rigidly in the Moslem faith.

I have discharged my promise of enumerating what seem the secondary causes and favourable circumstances to which Islamism owes its success; and as it is our duty to deal with the secular rather than the religious aspects of questions like this, I shall not dwell upon what falls within the province of the theological teacher, more properly than that of the historical student. Yet the causes and consequences of religious revolutions are so intimately bound up with the religious ideas, of which they are the outgrowth, that the simplest record of events would be imperfect, which made no reference to the nature of these ideas, and failed to ask, in what their strength, vitality, and vivifying power consisted. This must, I think, have struck every reader as the one great defect which mars the splendid pages of Gibbon. Where religion is involved, he seems ever to hover round his subject, without penetrating into the heart of it. Sceptical as to the existence of religious truth, he did not care to search for the inner character of the special truth which was the living and operative element in this immense and, I will venture to say, on his principles, inexplicable movement of the human mind. And therefore, the great sceptic, "smiling, put the question by." We are, however, it may be assumed, conscious that the form and nature of the social life in which we find ourselves, is the result of a revolution brought about by the action of religious ideas. And we are also conscious that, because these ideas were living, and true, and strong, and indestructible, they developed themselves, despite of all difficulty and opposition, first, in the practice of those who received them, and then in external institutions, which have changed not only the moral condition, but the outward aspect of human society. When, therefore, we encounter another great spiritual influence exhibiting in its action upon mankind many features analogous to that which has been experienced by ourselves, —immense activity for instance, and immense success,—

if we have any faith in our own position, we shall be constrained to believe that something living, and true, and strong, and indestructible, was underlying this other movement also, helping to bring it to the birth, and supplying it with that unexhausted vigour by which it pervaded and subdued half the population of the known world. The great fundamental principle of Islamism will not escape the thoughtful student of history, and when he has once mastered its true character, he will not be surprised at its victorious achievements and extraordinary strength. The Monotheism of Mohammed, the simple proclamation of the Unity of God, had it taken no other shape than that of a mere formal proposition, would have fallen ineffectually upon the minds of men; for men are never moved in masses by abstractions, and this particular doctrine has more than once been put forth, without being followed by any such results. But the idea of Mohammed involved much more than mere arithmetical unity. The God he proclaimed to his people was not merely One, but a personal and verily present God, an embodied Will, an unseen but real Power, legislating for them, speaking to them, encouraging, menacing, warning; enforcing the destruction of idolatry and error, by terrible penalties and exquisite rewards. To the idea of Unity were added the attributes of vitality, personality, volition, will, moral purpose, power, and providence; or, in less scholastic language, the God of Mohammed was a real, living, acting Being, ruling, directing, and assisting His people; ordaining that these things should be, and that those should not be; perpetually leading them on by the hand, in a path already defined by a steady, personal, immutable Will. I am not concerned at present with the faults and short-comings of this idea; nor shall I stop to point out the additional elements which are required to supplement and perfect it. We are concerned with the fact, that it came forth before the men of that generation, as a reality and a power, when

the human mind was oppressed with a sense of utter unreality in all around it, and degraded by the pressure of positive falsehood and corruption. Disgusted by the loathsome impurity of the old national Fetish-worship; blinded by metaphysical subtletics and ever-unsuccessful attempts at the logical definition of divine things; distracted by a divided worship; deafened by the sound of perpetual controversy, and tossed to and fro by the flux and reflux of opinion, even the most earnest minds must have regarded God as a Being very far away from them, and yearned for one like Him, whom Mohammed proclaimed, an actual Teacher, Leader, and Judge of men. At that moment a voice was heard declaring to the poor Arab locust-eaters, the old Jewish truth, "There is a God living, and personal, no empty formula to play with, but a real Father and Lord, who sits in the highest heavens, yet actually governs the kingdoms of the earth, not far from every one of us, ruling the nations with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. He is your God, and you are His people, the champions of His cause, the chosen ministers of His will: go forth in His name to victory." And they arose and conquered the world.

It is, as we have said, the province of the theologian to point out that the grandeur of the idea ought not to blind our eyes to its imperfection, and that, as it represents but a single side of the truth, it cannot be destined to maintain a permanent empire over the human intelligence. Yet we may admit that the historian knows its outgrowth to have been partial, temporary, and local. It has resulted in conquest, not in the permanent effects of conquest; in conversion, but not in the true fruits of conversion. Islamism has overrun large portions of the earth's surface, but it has created no polities which are not either already extinguished, or exhibit manifest signs of corruption and decay. It has received vast numbers of human beings into its faith, but its proselytism ceased with its aggression. It has never

given birth to a "Church," in the true sense of the word,—a living society, which attests its life by growth and expansion, and the assimilation of foreign elements into itself. It gave birth to a brilliant civilization, in Cairo, in Damascus, in Cordova, in Bagdad; yet this civilization was not the fruit of its religious faith, it was rather produced in spite of it. Where the civilization flourished, the faith decayed, and history shows no instance of their lasting co-existence.

A very brief narrative of events will be sufficient where the facts are probably familiar to all. Mohammed was born in the year 570 A.D. His father was of a family distinguished in the wars of his country, and had himself defended Mecca against the Abyssinians. But the future Prophet lost both his parents in infancy. Abou-Taleb, his uncle, protected the orphan. This protection, however, did not elevate him very highly in the social scale. The boy became a camel-driver,—an occupation which engrossed his early years, and gave him an acquaintance with persons and places which exercised no small influence upon his intellect and future fortunes. Khadijah, a rich widow, employed him to superintend and regulate her affairs; and being pleased with the skill and integrity of his management, eventually espoused him. His easy circumstances permitted idleness, or, at any rate, rescued him from the necessity of manual employment. Henceforward, his time was spent in meditation: he sought the silence and solitude of the desert; he spent whole nights plunged in the profoundest reveries. At length, when forty years of age,—ever a mystic number in the East,—he declared his mission and his designs. Those intrusted with this confidence were, in the first instance, a small band. Khadijah his wife, Said his freeman, Ali his cousin, and Abou-beker his intimate friend. To them he disclosed the revelations made to him by the angel Gabriel, which he embodied in "the Book" (Al-Koran), and designated the doctrines it contained as

"Islam," a word signifying complete abandonment to God. The faithful few did not very rapidly increase their numbers. Mohammed, however, was not discouraged; he invited his kinsmen, about forty in number,—forty again,—to a banquet, and after a brief address, demanded, "Who will be my Vizier, my Brother, my Deputy?" All were silent. Then the fiery Ali broke forth, "I will: I will beat out the teeth, pull out the eyes, rip up the bellies, and break the legs of all who oppose you! I will be your vizier over them." Notwithstanding this highly encouraging response, Mohammed did not make much progress with his countrymen. The vested interests of the Koreishite priesthood were against him. He became the object of popular odium. Old Abou-Taleb warned him of the fact. But the Prophet was inspired with the true spirit of religious enthusiasm, if with nothing else. "If all the tiles on the housetops were devils," said Luther, at the gates of Worms, "I would not go back!" "Uncle," replied Mohammed, "if they could set the sun against me on my right hand, and the moon on my left, I would not abandon the affair!" * He continued in his course; but the Prophet was not accepted in his own country. Persecution became very violent; he had lost the faithful Khadijah; Abou-Taleb, too, was gone, and at last Mohammed was compelled to fly from before the face of his enemies, and take refuge in Yathreb, a city which had long been the rival of Mecca. This was the famous Hegira, or Flight, from which the Mohammedans date the commencement of their era. Yathreb, now Medina-tal-Nabi, or the "City of the Prophet," received him with open arms. His first care was to crush the Koreishites. With only 313 men, he fell upon a thousand of them at Bedar, and, by scattering a handful of dust in the air, he at the same time scattered his almost victorious

16th July, A.D. 622.

* Ockley, Life of Mohammed, p. 15: Bohn,

enemies before him, with the imprecation, "May your face be confounded!" Still the war continued with unmitigated ferocity and dubious success. To his other enemies were now added the Jews. He was defeated at Ohad. The Jews and Koreishites besieged him in Medina. He cut a formidable trench before the city, from which this struggle is known in history as the "War of the Ditch;" and partly by the effect of this expedient, partly by a successful attempt at sowing dissension in the hostile camp, he dispersed the besiegers, and made a truce for ten years with his enemies from Mecca. During this period he entered the city itself, and made many conversions, probably commenced some intrigues; but the people of Mecca are said, in the year 630 A.D., to have broken the truce. This time Mohammed was instantly upon them, at the head of ten thousand men. He made his way into the city almost without opposition. Seven times he rode on his camel round the Caaba, then, entering, proclaimed with a loud voice, "Alla akbar!" (God is great), and gave orders for the destruction of the three hundred and sixty idols which adorned or polluted its walls.

A.D. 627.

A.D. 630.

He had now reached the object of his ambitious life and fervent fanaticism. Chief of a powerful nation, and recognized Prophet of God, he harangued his followers to the effect "that God had put to flight his enemies, and put under his feet everything that is visible,—men, animals, goods, riches,—except only the government of the Caaba and the keeping of the cup for the pilgrims to drink out of." * It does not seem certain whether it was at this time, or a little before it, that the firmness of his faith, or the vastness of his ambition, induced him to defy, by an invitation to adopt Islamism, the two most powerful potentates then existing in the world,—Chosroes, king of Persia, and Heraclius, emperor of the East. Chosroes tore the letter in pieces, and declared that if

* Ockley, p. 54.

the writer were not cured of his insanity, he would have his head. "So shall his kingdom be rent piecemeal!" replied the indignant Prophet. Heraclius, it is said by the Arabs, treated the missive with respect, and placed it beneath his pillow. "I will disturb his slumbers," must have been the sender's thought. In a few years both predictions were fully realized. But not by Mohammed himself. His successes were limited to the submission of all the Arab tribes, who voluntarily professed the new faith, or were exterminated by Khaled, the Sword of God. Once only it seemed probable that he would be compelled to measure himself against the Byzantine emperor. A quarrel with the Syrian Greeks, whose country had been reconquered by Heraclius from Chosroes, brought Mohammed into the field. Mounted on his camel, and clad in robes of green, he appeared at the head of 10,000 horsemen, 20,000 foot-soldiers, and 12,000 camels. Heraclius had raised the force, and revived the reputation of the Roman army, as it was still called; but it fell back before this formidable foe. The Prophet returned to his country, and, probably feeling the approach of disease, made a magnificent pilgrimage to Mecca, at the head of 114,000 followers. Scarcely had he reached Medina once more, when he was struck down by the hand of death, on the 8th of June, 632 A.D., the eleventh year of the Hegira, and the sixty-first of his age. A.D. 632.

The death of the Prophet for a moment imperilled the success of his great attempt. He had left no special directions either as to the form of government to be established after his decease, or as to the order of succession. Faction availed itself of the omission, and a period of anarchy seemed at hand. Ali was undoubtedly, from relationship as from character and reputation, the fittest of all the claimants for the glorious but difficult position of leader of the tribes of Islam. He was son of Abou-Taleb, and cousin-german of the Prophet, the very earliest of

his converts (save Said and Khadijah), and, finally, the husband of his daughter Fatima. But the intrigues of Ayesha, Mohammed's favourite wife, procured the election of her father, Abou-beker, after a hot dispute between the people of Mecca and those of Medina, each of whom, like the men of Judah and Israel, claimed the "greatest share" in the Prophet. The Khalif (Khalifah, "successor" or "vicar"), says the quaint historian of the Saracens, "had work enough to maintain his new government, for it had not as yet taken such deep root in the hearts of men, but that they would very willingly have shaken it off, had they known how."* But the great difficulty was the common difficulty in all feeble or unsettled governments, — an "ignorant impatience" of taxation. "They will say their prayers," said Omar, to the new Master of the Faithful, "but they refuse to pay their money,"—a perplexity which has beset rulers of other creeds and times. The Gordian knot of this difficulty was cut by Khaled, the Sword of God, who commenced his brilliant career by striking off the head of a leader among the recalcitrant chiefs, Malec Ebn Noweirah; but the peace of the Khalif was also disturbed by a rival apostle and prophet, Moseilama, who had composed a koran in imitation of Mohammed, and was attracting a large number of followers. It cost the orthodox a bloody battle before they could rid themselves of the impostor, who was transfixed by a black slave, with the very javelin that had slain Hamza, the uncle of Mohammed. Of the foreign conquests of Abou-beker we must speak hereafter. He died in their mid-career, on the 23rd of August, 634 A.D., the very day on which Damascus was taken by storm. His character may be judged of by the fact that the whole inventory of his property amounted to five drachmas, which he ordered to be

A.D. 632.

A.D. 634.

* Ockley, p. 84.

distributed among the Mussulmans. "A hard pattern for his successor," as Omar, his successor, truly said. Ali now hoped that his claim would be recognized. But the dying man had appointed Omar to say the public prayer in his place, and the party of Ali appear to have felt themselves incapable of offering opposition. There was considerable controversy about the title of the new ruler. Originally, they had styled him "Khalif of the Khalif of the Apostle of God;" but, wisely reflecting that the title was a very long one, and that in time it would grow indefinitely longer, they substituted, as more practicable, "Emperor of the Believers." The brilliant reign of Omar was occupied in the consolidation of his domestic power, and in an almost uninterrupted career of external conquest. He fell, in the tenth year of his reign, by the dagger of a Persian slave, as he was saying prayer in the mosque.

A.D. 634.

A.D. 643.

For the third time Ali was within a single step of the throne; for the third time he was disappointed. Omar, during the three days for which he lingered, would declare no successor. He, however, appointed a committee of six to decide the question; among which number were Ali and Othman, the editor, as we should call him, of the fragmentary contents of the Koran. The latter proved himself more compliant to the demands of his colleagues, and was, in consequence, elected. "Though a religious man in his way," we are told, "and well disposed, he was, nevertheless, very unfit for government. He committed a great many impolitic acts, and gave occasion to his enemies to murmur and rebel against his government."* He was threatened with deposition: cabals and conspiracies were multiplied on every side. The treachery of his secretary, who forged letters in his name, greatly increased the general animosity. At last, he was invested, in his own house, by the Egyptian

* Ockley, p. 278.

insurgents, and slain, notwithstanding some partial assistance from Ali, with the Koran in his lap, at the age of eighty two.

The forbearance of Ali was at last rewarded. On the very day of Othman's death, the leading chieftains took the oath of allegiance to him, many of them, however, with the reservation of breaking it on the first favourable opportunity. He, at first, refused the dignity; declaring, whether with sincerity or not it is impossible to say, that he was ready to serve, but unwilling to rule. If he entertained a presentiment of the bloodshed and dissension which his accession was to cause, he may well have paused before plunging into the frightful anarchy which ensued. The friends of Othman, who were his bitterest enemies, may be regarded as representatives of the ancient Koreishites, whom the triumph of Mohammed reduced to obscurity. The Fatimites, so called from Ali's wife, the Prophet's daughter, on their part represented the victors in the revolution which he brought about. These were henceforth the two leading parties of Islamism. The "ancient grudge" was not appeased by their common adoption of the new faith. Under the names of Sonnites, the adherents of Othman, and Shiites (Sectaries or Separatists), who continue their allegiance to Ali and the family of the Prophet, these two sects have cursed, persecuted, and murdered each other for about eleven hundred years. The schism, if fatal to themselves, has been fortunate for Christendom. To the present day, the Sonnite descendant of the Turcoman would scarcely combine with the Persian Shiite, even to satisfy their common animosity against the Cross. Throughout the whole of Ali's reign he was engaged in a ceaseless struggle with these implacable enemies. To this period belong many of the most interesting incidents of Saracen story. The disaffected governors of the provinces raised the gory shirt of the murdered

A.D. 655.

A.D. 660.

Othman above the pulpit of Damascus, and thousands of furious fanatics flocking to this strange standard, swore vengeance against the house of Ali. But on the "Day of the Camel," beneath the walls of Bussorah, the rebels were cut to pieces, and Ayesha, the Prophet's widow, who had all along been the leading spirit of the opposition, was made captive, after a desperate struggle around the animal which bore her litter.

The battle of Bussorah, however, did not rid Ali of his two most formidable foes, Moawiyah, who had reduced Rhodes to the dominion of the Khalifate, and Amrou, conqueror of Egypt. With these indefatigable adversaries, the Fatimites are said to have fought the incredible number of ninety battles in one hundred and ten days. In the last of these, just as the party of Moawiyah was about to give way, Amrou upreared the Koran upon a lance, and restored the fortunes of the rebels when at their last extremity, by the ingenious expedient of declaring that the holy book, and not the sword, should decide their differences. The result was a singular one. Three frenzied zealots bound themselves to cut short the tangled web of strife and intrigue by the slaughter of the three leading chiefs. Poisoning their weapons, they went forth upon their errand. Ali was the only victim. Like his predecessor, he was stabbed in a mosque. The two others escaped.

At the moment of his death, Moawiyah, his rival, "son of the Liver-eater," held possession of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, and had been proclaimed Khalif in these countries.* Hasan, the son of the murdered man, though nominated at first to succeed his parents as leader of the Fatimites, did not feel himself strong enough to contend against such an enemy. He set forth to meet him in battle; but either distrusting his success, or disinclined, from the natural amiability of his

* After the battle of Chud, his mother, Hind, had eaten the liver of Hamza, Mohammed's uncle.

character, to further effusion of blood, he consented to an abdication. Hosein, the younger brother, opposed it vehemently, but in vain. In a few months the deposed Khalif met the fate which his dangerous proximity to the throne insured, and died of poison administered by the machinations of the reigning family. With him concluded the dynasty of the family of the Prophet.

A.D. 661.

The son of the Liver-eater was now without a rival, and took possession of the whole Khalifate. With him began the dynasty of the Ommiades, from Ommia, another form of his own name, or that of his grandfather. For ninety-two years this family were invested with the regal and sacerdotal office. The natural beauty and advantageous situation of the Syrian Damascus induced the Ommiades to adopt this city for their capital, and here they established a splendid court. But they never succeeded in quenching all elements of resistance. "The family of Hashem, of which were Mohammed and Ali," says the Arab historian, "lay like coals raked up in embers not able to stir."* The hearts of the people were with Hosein, who had escaped his elder brother's fate; but the Khalif disposed of the army as he would. Yet even in this case it was seen that the elements of real strength and permanent power are to be found in the former rather than in the latter source of political supremacy. The Ommiad Khalifs, degenerate in personal qualities, and stained with the blood of the children of the Prophet, gradually lost their hold upon the allegiance of their subjects, and, notwithstanding the energy of Merwan II., the last of their dynasty, succumbed before the Abassides, so named from Abbas, an uncle of Mohammed.

Abul Abbas, "the bloody," raised the black banner of that henceforward famous race, and the white ensign, so long victoriously borne by the house of Moawiyah, sank into the dust. Frightful butcheries were perpetrated by

A.D. 750.

* Ockley, p. 354.

the victors. Thousands of the opposite party were poniarded every day. Four-and-twenty of the leading chieftains among the Ommiades were invited to a banquet; in the midst of their revelry a bard was introduced, who sang the miserable fate of Hosein and of Said, slain by the fathers of the men who surrounded the festive board. As he finished, four-and-twenty executioners appeared behind the chairs of the Ommiades: their heads fell upon the table, and the feast was prolonged beside their gory remains. The sepulchres of the Khalifs of Damascus were violated, and the bones of Moawiyah and his successors reduced to ashes and scattered to the winds.

The dynasty of the Abassides was now firmly established throughout the East. Almansor, second of the line, destroyed Ctesiphon and Seleucia, the ancient capitals of Persia and the Seleucidæ, in order that no rival, richer in the traditions of the past, might dim the rising splendours of Bagdad, the newly-selected capital. Here was the seat of that civilization which, despite the stain of its sanguinary birth, so long fascinated the imagination of Western Europe, borne, like the bark of the poet, down the Tigris, in "the sheeny summer morn"—

> "By Bagdad's shrines of fretted gold,
> High walled gardens green and old;
> A goodly place, a goodly time;
> For it was in the golden prime
> Of good Haroun Alraschid."

Haroun, indeed, the third of the dynasty of the Abassides, saw the culmination of Saracen glory in the East, at the time when the star of the Carlovingian house culminated in the West, and has been hailed by history as the worthy contemporary of Charlemagne. His most glorious exploits were performed against the Greek empire. Eight times he invaded the Greek territory; he vanquished, successively, Irene and the usurper Nicephorus; he razed the city of Heraclea, on the Pontus, and forbade its reconstruction; he

A.D. 786.

imposed a tribute upon the Byzantines, which he compelled them to pay in money stamped with his own effigy. Had the two heroic representatives of the two twin civilizations met in the conflict of battle, the scimitar of Damascus would doubtless have recoiled before the Frankish battleaxe, as it did on the ever-memorable field of Tours. But in all the arts and refinements of peace, the victory would have remained with the courtly oriental. In mathematical science, in astronomy, in chemistry, in medicine, the Saracen had revived the knowledge of Greece, and surpassed it. Algebra and the Arabic numerals are the familiar evidence of what Europe owes to the ingenious race which she so long regarded as her most deadly foe.

The Khalifate of Bagdad had supplanted the Khalifate of Damascus, and the Abassides waded knee-deep in the blood of the rival house. Yet the proscribed family were not utterly annihilated. One of the unfortunate Ommiades, Abderaman, a mere youth, escaped the sword of his persecutors. He sought refuge in various parts of Egypt, among the Bedouins of Barca, and with other North-African tribes. Ultimately the Arabs of Spain, who had by this time obtained a firm footing in the country, invited him across the straits. As we have already seen, he responded to the call, and having been proclaimed king, revived in Europe the fallen fortunes of his house.* Henceforward the Khalifate of Cordova yielded neither in material splendour, nor in warlike glory, nor in the renown that waits upon science and civilization, to its Asiatic rivals of Damascus and Bagdad.

A.D. 755.

We have now glanced briefly at what may be called the domestic history of the Khalifate. It remains for us to give an equally brief sketch of its foreign extension. At the period to which we have brought down their history, the Saracens were masters of an empire nearly as extensive as

* Lecture X.

that of Rome in her palmiest days. On the east it had passed the Indus, and was established in the country of the Five Rivers. The countries which lie towards the sources of the Indus, and beyond the banks of the Oxus, and on the north-east coast of the Sea of Aral, were also theirs. Here "silken Samarcand" formed a magnificent emporium for their traffic with the nations of eastern Asia. The Caspian and the great Caucasian chain prevented their progress to the north. Nor do they appear to have effected any permanent settlement west of the Taurus and the Cilician gates; those great barriers of Asia Minor,—barriers, however, over which, in after-days, the Turcoman triumphantly carried the banner of the Crescent and the faith of the Prophet. But the Saracen possessed the whole seaboard of northern Africa, and even that part of its most western coast which lies between the spurs of the Atlas and the Atlantic Ocean. In Europe, if we except the province of Septimania in southern France, his conquests did not pass beyond the Asturian mountains and the Pyrenees. But he had won the rich islands of Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily, Cyprus, and Crete, and established the terror of his name by many a successful descent upon the Italian mainland. By what victories, and in what order, were these immense dominions acquired?

The whole process may be conveniently divided into stages: the consolidation of the Arab tribes in the Arabian peninsula itself; the conquest of Syria, the conquest of Persia, the conquest of Egypt; the interruption in this onward march of victory, caused by the internal discord which disturbed the Khalifate of Ali and his Ommiad successors; the resumption of aggressive movements on the side of Asia Minor and Constantinople, with the reduction of the ancient Sogdiana and the country beyond the Oxus; the immense impulse which carried the Arab horsemen over all the possessions of the Greek empire in Africa, and through the Moorish tribes, into the very waves of the Western Ocean;

and finally the invasion of Europe, the subjugation of Spain, and the daring project of passing through France and Germany, by the course of the Danube, to the gates of Constantinople, which was arrested on the field of Tours.

On the first of these topics we have already spoken. It includes the life of Mohammed (570—632), the reigns of his immediate successors (632—661), the dynasty of the Ommiades (661—750), and the dynasty of the Abassides, to the reign of Haroun-al-Raschid (750—786). From the Hegira (622) to the entrance of Abderaman into Spain (756), only one hundred and thirty-four years elapsed; yet this period saw the establishment of the Prophet's power over the united tribes of Arabia, and the foundation of the Khalifates of Damascus, of Bagdad, and of Cordova.

The Arab conquests during this time were in some measure contemporaneous. It will, however, aid the memory to consider them as they were separately developed. It was during the reign of the immediate successor of the Prophet that they may be fairly said to have commenced; for, as we have seen, Mohammed himself was brought face to face with the Greek empire only for a single moment. Abou-beker, however, no sooner felt himself securely seated upon the throne, than he sent what we should call a circular dispatch to all the Arab tribes, summoning them to join his standard. "This is to acquaint you," so runs the document, "that I intend to send the true believers into Syria, to take it out of the hands of the infidels. And I would have you to know, that the fighting for religion is an act of obedience to God."* When his forces were assembled, he gave them special directions for their conduct, which are both interesting and important, as they cast a considerable light upon the spirit and objects of the earlier Saracen invasion. "When you meet with your enemies, acquit yourselves like men, and do not turn your backs; and if you get

A.D. 632.

* Ockley, p. 93.

the victory, kill no little children, nor old people, nor women; destroy no palm-trees, nor burn any fields of corn; cut down no fruit-trees, nor do any mischief to cattle, only such as you kill to eat. When you make any covenant or article, stand to it, and be as good as your word. As you go on, you will find some religious persons that live retired in monasteries, proposing to themselves to serve God that way: let them alone, and neither kill them nor destroy their monasteries. But you will also find another sort of people, who belong to the synagogues of Satan, and have shaven crowns; be sure you cleave their skulls, and give them no quarter, till they either turn Mohammedans or pay tribute."*

The first exploit of the armies thus sent forth to battle and pillage was the capture of Bostra, the key of the Syrian province. The Greek empire was in a pitiable state: overrun by both the Goth and the Hun; threatened by the proud and powerful monarch of Persia, and lacerated by internal bloodshed, it presented but a feeble image of the majestic authority whose once awful name it had assumed. After Phocas had murdered his master, we are told by the historian, such lamentable havoc followed among the legions, that, in seven years' time, only two soldiers remained who had witnessed the inauguration of the usurper. Heraclius, an able prince and a brave soldier, had done something towards a restoration of the old traditionary glories of Rome. But his attention was absorbed by Persia; his arms employed in re-conquering the provinces which had been subjugated by that power. He heeded not the dark cloud, about the bigness of a man's hand, which was gathering in the southern horizon. Before he became aware of its nature, it had covered the heavens with blackness, and swept the earth with the fury of a tornado. Bostra fell at once: the invaders dashed on, and laid siege to Damascus. Heraclius sent an army of 70,000 men to its assistance. They were swept away by the

* Ockley, p. 94.

scimitar, and the Saracens poured into the town. Before three days had elapsed, Khaled, who, more than any other commander, ancient or modern, seems to merit the common epithet of "thunderbolt of war," had left Damascus behind him, and was on his way to fresh victories. The battle of Yermouk, which lasted several days, laid open the way to Palestine, and practically achieved its subjugation. Thrice were the Saracens beaten back, and thrice were they compelled to return to the charge, by the tears and entreaties, the imprecations and blows of the women stationed in the rear. "Hell-fire is behind you," cried Abu-Sofian before the fight. Yet Abu-Sofian, forced to recoil with the rest, was brought up, and compelled to renew the combat, by the more mundane retribution of a hearty blow upon the head with a tent-pole, inflicted by one of their viragos. Omar had now succeeded Abou-beker, who, as we have said, died on the day when Damascus fell. To Omar belongs the glory of reducing Jerusalem. The city capitulated, upon terms which Ockley has given at length, because they were the pattern which Mohammedan princes have chiefly imitated.* They mainly consisted in protection to the persons of the inhabitants, and permission to retain the use of their churches. The austere and ascetic Khalif made his entrance upon a camel. Before him, on his saddle, he carried a bag of dates, another of corn, and a leathern bottle of water. Of this frugal repast he himself partook, and proffered a portion to the bystanders. Ten days was the period of his stay in Jerusalem. He next directed his march against Aleppo and Antioch. They offered no real resistance; and with the fall of the latter city, the beautiful, wealthy, and voluptuous capital of Syria, that province passed away for ever from the Greek empire. But in the mean time, the Persian kingdom had been rapidly approaching the same fate. Of the armed bands who obeyed the sum-

A.D. 638.

* Ockley, p. 211.

mons of Abou-beker, a considerable number, leaving to their comrades the prosecution of the Syrian campaign, turned their steps towards the Euphrates. The Persians collected a large force to oppose their progress; but the valour of their armies had either been greatly overrated in former times, or, in this terrible crisis, exhibited a marvellous deterioration. At the partition of the Macedonian conquests, Seleucus had established a kingdom in those regions, which subsisted under his descendants, the Seleucidæ, until Arsaces revolting, B.C. 256, installed the Arsacidæ, or Parthian race, upon the throne. These were in their turn overthrown by Ardschir, or Artaxerxes, the father of the famous Sapor, with whom commenced the Persian dynasty of the Sassanides, A.D. 226. The Sassanides proved themselves formidable rivals of the Roman empire, whose armies they more than once most signally defeated. But they were now themselves to succumb to a handful of zealots, who wielded the scimitar with irresistible fury and success. If we are to credit the Arab chroniclers, thirty thousand of their countrymen utterly routed one hundred and fifty thousand of their opponents on the fatal field of Cadesia. The combat lasted three days. The first was called that of "Concession;" the second that of "Succours," as the Arabs received a reinforcement; the third is known as the "Day of Cormorants," in allusion to the frightful carnage which bestrewed the field. We are even told that, after sunset, so obstinate was the strife, the combatants hewed and hacked at each other by torchlight; and the discordant yells and screams of those engaged on either side, have given to this memorable night the name of the "Night of barking." On the morrow, the struggle was as fierce as ever; but a whirlwind having swept away the canopy which protected the Persian leader, Rustam, from the blazing sun, he sought shelter behind his baggage-mules. Here Rustam, meeting with an accident, precipitated himself into a rivulet, and was slain. His gory

head, affixed to a lance, and placed upon his vacant throne, inspired the Arabs with triumphant fury, and his own followers with despair. The result was a rout of the Persian army, complete and irremediable. The great banner of the Sassanides, the blacksmith's apron of their heroic founder, now expanded to an immense size, and, thickly incrusted with gems of fabulous value, fell into the hands of the victors. With the loss of this palladium of their empire, the Sassanides lost all courage and hope of successful resistance. The Arabs went on from victory to victory: they established colonies at Bussorah and Kufa, in Irâk; they fell furiously upon Ctesiphon, which they captured without difficulty. The Persians made one final effort, but they were utterly scattered by the "victory of victories," a name which the Arabs have given to the sanguinary battle at Nohavend, in consideration of its importance. Ispahan was taken, Persepolis sacked, and the Persian king himself nearly captured among its falling palaces. He attempted to obtain assistance from the emperor of China; but the attempt was vain: he perished by assassination, on the banks of the Oxus, and all Khorassan was added to the Saracen empire.

A.D. 636.

A.D. 642.

So rolled the tide of conquest to the East. But during the same time, an equally important movement occurred in the opposite direction. Amrou acquired Egypt from the Greek empire. Here treachery and religious dissension materially assisted the Arab arms. The Monophysite heretics, so called from their assertion of a single nature only in the Son of God, were cruelly persecuted by the orthodox Greeks, and, as a natural consequence, bitterly exasperated against them. Perhaps by their assistance, certainly without their opposition, the Khalif, after a siege of fourteen months, obtained possession of Alexandria, in many respects the second city in the world; so far as the

A.D. 639.

traditions of ancient learning and of the philosophical schools were concerned, undoubtedly the first. Two attempts were made by the Empire to recover the great prize; twice their fleet and army occupied the bay and the fortifications, but twice they were repulsed by the valour of Amrou. Gibbon has laboured, and not without success, to relieve the memory of the victor from the odious stain of having wantonly destroyed the wisdom and knowledge of the elder world, so far, at least, as it was contained in the written letter, by firing the library of Alexandria. What seems certain is, that during the tumultuous days of the siege and capture of the city, immense numbers of volumes, the most precious relics of antiquity, were consumed as fuel, or made away with for other purposes. The well-known tradition shifts the responsibility of the act upon Omar himself, to whom Amrou had applied for instructions. "If the Greek writings," said the fanatic and logical Khalif, "agree with the Book of God, they are useless, and need not be preserved; if they do not agree with it, they are mischievous, and ought to be destroyed." But the story is suspicious in its origin, and from the channel through which it reaches us. The wise administration of Amrou, his regulation of the local imposts and taxation, and the important public works undertaken under his auspices, prove him to have been a man very different from the ignorant and malignant barbarian which his Greek enemies represented him to be. One of his projects is connected with a subject of deep interest at the present day. He revived an idea, which has often amused the rulers of Egypt,—the connection of the Mediterranean and the Red Sea by means of a canal. M. Lesseps very probably, as a projector, considers himself the successor of the Pharaohs, the Greek Ptolemies, the Roman Cæsars, and the Arabian Khalifs. All undoubtedly looked with some favour on the scheme, for the success of which he seems inclined to involve half Europe in con-

tention; yet all in turn abandoned it, convinced that it either could not or ought not to be carried out. The objection of Amrou was, that it would open to the unbelievers a path to the holy cities. It is not impossible that the same objection may still have some weight with the Mussulman mind. Be these things as they may, the conquest of Alexandria brought with it the subjection of the greater part of the Greek seaboard of North Africa, and by the year 648 A.D., the Saracens were masters of a large portion of territory, and of the city of Tripoli.

A.D. 648.

And now occurred a pause in this succession of marvels. The intestine discords which followed upon the Khalifate of Ali found ample employment for the Arab energies and arms. Ali established himself in Irâk, one of the Persian conquests of the faith of Islam, a country which acquired the name of "Little Arabia," from the fact that it so closely reproduced the physical features of the Arab peninsula. Moawiyah, his rival, ruled in Syria, where the Koreishite party were predominant. We have seen the success of their machinations, and their triumph, in the Ommiad dynasty. The Ommiades struck for a great prize,—nothing less than Constantinople itself, the capital of their enemies, the central seat of the only power which made it impossible for them to feel that they were as yet masters of the world. So far had they advanced in the art of warfare, and so entirely had they risen above their original instincts and habits, that in 668 A.D., we find them in possession of a fleet which landed their army almost beneath the walls of Constantinople. But those walls were of portentous height and thickness; they were defended by desperate men and the unknown terrors of the Greek fire. This formidable combustible played such havoc with the besiegers, that on six several occasions, for six successive years, they were driven back, scathed and dismayed, from their prey. A similar result followed the still more formidable

A.D. 675.

attempt of the Khalif Soliman, in 718. The admirable application of a new art saved the city of the Cæsars for a thousand years. For these disappointments on the European shore, the Saracens were more than compensated in Asia. The countries lying beyond the Caspian Sea, between the Oxus and the Jaxartes, were reduced by the governors of Khorassan. The new empire reached the utmost limits of that established by the great Macedonian conqueror. Its outlying provinces, under the name of kingdoms, retained a Greek civilization, the character and fortunes of which form one of the most curious and interesting problems of history. For a time, at any rate, the new masters of the country revived this civilization by their presence, and perpetuated its traditions, until all were swept away by the terrible inundations of barbaric war which devastated the whole Asiatic continent. A.D. 710.

In Africa, the onward course of Saracen conquest was, for a brief time, arrested at Tripoli. But the Greek emperors held the whole seaboard with a very feeble grasp. The subject population, exhausted by oppressive taxes, were in a condition to welcome any foreign master; and the Khalifs were not long in answering to a wish which, it is believed, found actual expression in an invitation to the Arab arms. Akbah traversed the whole strip of territory which abuts on the Mediterranean with a victorious expeditionary force; he even reached the great mystic Ocean, which was deemed the ultimate boundary of the earth, and, like the Lombard chief of the Abruzzi, spurred his charger into the waves. A still more practical demonstration of his power, was the foundation of Kairoan, south of Tunis, "to curb the levity of the barbarian, and to serve as a place of refuge against the accidents of war." A.D. 670. This barbarian was the Berber, or Moor, perhaps a Semitic congener of the Arab himself; at any rate, a wild man and a warrior, admirably adapted for assimilation with the

conquering race. Domestic dissension, however, for a time, prevented the complete conquest of Africa. Akbah himself fell in the rude warfare waged against the Moors. The Greeks still maintained a precarious hold of the coast. It was not till the time of the Khalif Abd-el-Mélek, that Hassan, his lieutenant, asserted the Saracen supremacy in North Africa, by the conflagration of Carthage, its ancient queen, and the last remaining relic of what had once been the absolute dominion of Rome on the southern littoral of the Mediterranean. The Moors gave some trouble, but not much. A final rising, under their queen Kahina, was put down in 709 A.D. Henceforward, they were so thoroughly amalgamated with their Saracen masters, that, to European imagination, the two became identical. To the semi-barbarous hunters of the Atlas were ascribed the graceful civilization, the accomplished arts, the learning, the poetry, the chivalric spirit, the gorgeous palaces of Grenada, Cordova, and Seville.

A.D. 692.

A.D. 698.

A.D. 709.

We have now brought down the story of the Saracen successes to the period of their advent into Europe. In the last lecture we detailed the circumstances of their introduction into Spain, and the causes which rendered possible, or at the least facilitated, their conquest of the Peninsula, and that temporary triumph of their arms beyond the Pyrenees, which rendered, as has been said, the rulers of Samarcand and Damascus lords of the vineyards of Gascony and the city of Bordeaux. We have also explained the reason why the dynasty of the Ommiades, after its deposition in the East, revived with new splendour in the West, and made Cordova more than the rival of Bagdad. The flight of Abderaman from the persecuting sword of the Abassides, and the fact that he sought shelter as a hunted fugitive in the fastnesses of Mount Atlas, and was from thence invited by the partisans of the white banner

A.D. 711.

across the straits, has been already recorded in the present lecture. The power of the Khalifate of Cordova, checked by Charles Martel upon the field of Tours, never was enabled to develop itself in proportions sufficiently formidable to rival or seriously embarrass the great empire administered from Aix-la-Chapelle; nor, on the other hand, was the precarious authority exercised by Charlemagne in the Spanish marches, any real counterpoise to Saracen domination south of the Pyrenees. The day of Roncesval might be set against the day of Tours. It was long ere the guerilla chieftaincies of the Asturian mountains expanded into the powerful kingdoms of Aragon and Castile; but in the mean time, beside the beautiful Vega of Grenada, and in the gorgeously-adorned palaces of Cordova, Toledo, and Seville, the arts of peace had succeeded to the aspirations of war, and a luxury, the most elaborate, brilliant, and voluptuous, supplanted the iron-hilted scimitars, the banquets of dates and water, the leathern clothing, of the first fanatic followers of the Prophet. While Northern Europe was still painfully emerging from the gloom of its indigenous barbarism, a flood of light was poured by arts, science, philosophy, literature, and industrial accomplishments, over all the central seats of the Saracen power,—from Samarcand to Bagdad, from Bagdad to Damascus, Cairo, Fez, Cordova, and the beautiful city whose gardens and palaces of world-wide fame caught the cool breezes of the Sierra Nevada as they swept downward to the Andalusian plains. Saracen civilization has disappeared, but not like the other great Semitic civilization of the ancient world. The ruins of Carthage, and the still stately halls of the Alhambra, are types of their two destinies. Of the fall of Carthage, Michelet could write with truth: "Then was seen a thing that is found nowhere else in history—an entire civilization passing away at a blow, like a falling star. The periplus of Hanno, a few medals, a score of verses in Plautus, and there is all that remains of

the Carthaginian world." But the dominion of the Khalifate has done a nobler work in the world's history, and exercised a larger and more permanent influence upon the minds of men. The reviver, almost the creator, of the science of the starry heavens, and of the analysis of those material substances and forces which the genius of our own age has made "the vassals of our will," the Saracen mind may boast of having transmitted to the modern world the most important, because the earliest, elements of all that is splendid or useful in human speculation. The daily study of the revived philosophy of Aristotle; the daily use of the most subtle instrument of mathematical investigation, may serve to aemind the two most illustrious universities of Europe, of their obligations to the countrymen of Almanzor and Averroes, and to keep alive, beside the Isis and the Cam, traditions which have travelled from Bagdad and Samarcand. Yet, perhaps, this very force and brilliancy of intellectual power contained a peril for us which it was well should pass away. It was well for European Christendom that the representative of Islamism, with whom she has mainly had to deal, should have brought with him the rudeness of the Asiatic steppes, rather than the fire of Arabia and the refinement of Spain; that the gallant and courteous Saracen should have been replaced upon her borders by the savage herdsman of the Oxus, the barbarian scion of the Turco-Tatar stock, living upon mare's milk, and clad in the undressed skins of sheep. But these are matters which belong to the history of another age. We have followed the great movement inaugurated by Mohammed up to the era of Charlemagne. There is a pause for a moment in the story of Saracen domination in Spain, soon to be broken by the clash of the first onset between the chivalry of Grenada and Castile.

LECTURE XII.

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN ITS RELATION TO THE OLD SOCIETY.

Πύλαι Ἅδου οὐ κατισχύσουσιν αὐτῆς.—St. Matthew, xvi. 18.

"Quoties hoc patrum avorumque ætate negotium est magistratibus datum, ut sacra externa fieri vetarent; sacrificulos vatesque foro, circo, urbe prohiberent; vaticinos libros conquirerent comburerentque, omnem disciplinam sacrificandi præterquam more Romano abolerent? Judicabant enim prudentissimi viri omnis divini humanique juris, nihil æquè dissolvendæ religionis esse, quam ubi non patrio, sed externo ritu sacrificaretur."—Liv. lib. xxxix. c. 16.

Synopsis.—Contemporaneous appearance of the Church and the Empire in the world.—The latter possessed all the external indications of permanence, yet the former survived it.—The reason why the Church succeeded.—Gibbon's secondary causes delusive.—The Church unpopular with the Court and Government; with the Philosophers; with the Populace.—The effect of the Church upon the old Society in several special ways: in reference to marriage and the family life; to celibacy; to the spectacles; to slavery; to charitable institutions.—The gradual growth of the political influence of the Church.—She was at first a reformer of morals, rather than of laws.—Effects of the edicts of Galerius and Constantine.—Action of Christianity upon the criminal and civil law.—Its effect with regard to slavery; gladiatorial games; the observance of Sunday.—The final struggle and fall of Heathenism.—All this not accomplished without certain ill effects upon the character of the Church:—(1.) An infusion of the secular spirit, owing to its connection with affairs of state, and its practical subordination to the emperors.—(2.) An approximation to the practices of Heathenism, from a spirit of accommodation.—(3.) Confusion with the Greco-oriental Gnosis of Alexandria.

It would be something worse than a mere platitude to say, that any view of the connection between Ancient and Modern History would be incomplete which omitted from consideration the character and progress of the Christian

Church. We have maintained the principle, that Life is the characteristic and test of what belongs to the modern world, in other words, to ourselves; and that Death consigns peoples, their annals and their institutions, to the domain of ancient history. Whatever lives, and gives us assurance that it exercises the functions of life, by acting upon that with which it is brought into contact and relation in the world around, must be regarded as connected with the existing era, with our own interests, and "our own age," as we are fond of calling it, however widely its present may differ from its original form, or however remote may be the period which beheld its birth. "The form decays, the function never dies." In cases where this is true, the abiding influence, as it passes onward from one generation to another, links them together into a unity of its own, which refuses to be severed by mere logical conceptions, or the dramatic necessities of historical narrative. Even upon principles much less wide than these, the Christian Church of the first eight centuries might claim a living connection with the political interests of the nineteenth, and vindicate its right to be regarded as one of the great formative powers which have determined the existing aspects of European society, and moulded our modern life. In a sense more true and deep than we can venture to develop here, a new and divine life was born for the world with the birth of the Divine Founder of the Church, and in that life we and all men live and move and have our being.* But dismissing, as we must do, what relates to the spiritual nature, and purely theological history of the Christian society, we still shall be compelled to recognize its political importance as chief among the many subtle links which unite the old-world order of things to the new. Alone, it rendered

* I may venture to refer, for illustration, to the exceedingly beautiful chapter which concludes the second volume of Mr. Gladstone's "Homer and the Homeric Age."

possible the transition from the Empire to the barbarian nationalities, and even in the very shock of their conflict, so far succeeded in fusing the antagonist elements, that neither entirely absorbed the other, or was itself eliminated from that very complex civilization which was the result of their meeting. To the Church we owe the fact, that human history is still a whole; that the chain of its continuity has never been entirely severed, and that we are "heirs of all the ages," though our place is in "the foremost files of time." To the Church, therefore, and to the part it played in this "cardinal and critical" period of the world's history, the modern historian must direct his eyes, even though he be determined, in the coldest and most dispassionate spirit, to confine his regards to its purely secular aspects. Something indeed of this sort must, for many reasons, be our own method. We cannot trespass upon the province of religious belief or theological science, hardly upon that of ecclesiastical history. Happily, the late labours of distinguished men have rendered the task superfluous. It will be our duty to consider, very briefly, the relations of the Church to the old Social Order into which she was born, and to the new one which she so materially helped to form, as well as the reflex influences exercised by both upon her own character and constitution. "Founded on the same day," says M. de Broglie, "as the Christian Church, and thereby associated, though with a very different title, in the promotion of the same work, the imperial monarchy of Rome was not called to the same destiny. Their point of departure alone was common to the two. While, despite the severest trials, the Church took root, grew, and expanded over all the earth, the Roman monarchy, in the full brilliance of its prosperity, at first became enfeebled, was then rent piecemeal by discord, and was finally dissolved. The progress of the one, and the decline of the other, were in almost exact correspondence."*

* L'Eglise et l'Empire Romain, au IV. Siècle, ch. i.

And yet, between these two powers, born into the world at the same epoch, there could not have seemed, according to the common rules of human judgment, the smallest room for serious rivalry. On the side of the Empire were arrayed all the material appliances, as well as all those more subtle moral agencies, which seem to confer strength and stability upon human institutions,—the great fact of existence and assured success; the moral *vis inertiæ* which, except under very special conditions, is so great a source of strength to established governments; an admirable executive, so formed as to embrace the most minute concerns of the Empire, and manipulate them with exquisite skill; the physical force of veteran armies; the prestige of an almost unbroken series of military triumphs; world-wide dominion; the glittering presence of imperialism; the processions, the pageants, the mysteries, the oracles, the temples, the priests of an ancient and sensuously-attractive faith,—a faith which penetrated and pervaded all the existing literature, all public, and even private life; and when this faith had begun to fade from the thoughts and affections of the multitude, the new Cæsar-worship which supplied its place,—that undefinable awe which still lingered round the name of "Rome;"—in a word, all the thousand direct and indirect influences which an existing domination and an established religion, the magic of a glorious Past, and a great, present, visible, tangible power of the Sword, always have exercised, and always will exercise, over the minds of men. To all this the Church —speaking from the stand-point of that generation—could only oppose a doctrine contemptible in its antecedents, in its teachers, and in itself; a doctrine repulsive to the unregenerate instincts of the human heart, but doubly hateful to the debased habits into which these instincts had been developed among the imperial people. The Gospel of Christ, the message of glad tidings, was no acceptable message to a generation which sat in darkness, and hated the light, because its

deeds were evil. And, therefore, among them it was not proclaimed upon the housetop, or in the market-place, but in the obscure dwellings of the artisan, the gladiator, and the slave; by stealth, and in the darkness of night, in subterranean hiding-places, in crypts, in catacombs and cemeteries; in the stealthy haunts of the outcasts whom the seething vice of a great city cast forth as from a caldron of iniquity. Nor, again, did the doctrine derive strength from the social influence of those who proclaimed it to the world. It rested not upon the favour of the great, on the sword of the soldier, or the rhetoric of the schools. Its teachers were men who were despised, as their Master was; men who had trials of "mockings and scourgings, of bonds and imprisonment; who were tempted, who were sawn asunder, who were slain with the sword; men clad in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, afflicted, tormented; who wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and in caves of the earth." And yet they conquered. Neither prejudice, nor persecution, nor the full exercise of imperial vengeance and popular hatred, nor the established interests of Paganism, nor the sophisms of philosophy, availed to arrest the progress of the new faith. The strangeness of the phenomenon needs no rhetorical exaggeration to move our wonder. It can never be stated with the most strict adherence to naked fact, and in the simplest form, without inspiring the conviction that it is a problem whose solution transcends the limits of human experience, and implies the existence of an element supernatural and divine. If the Church triumphed, it was not by the ordinary means, or under the usual circumstances, which produce success. It was, as has been graphically said by one whose genius has thoroughly grasped this strange age, "in spite of the contaminating atmosphere of sin which surrounded her, in spite of having to form herself, not out of a race of pure and separate creatures, but, by a most literal 'new birth,' out of those very fallen masses

who insulted and persecuted her; in spite of having to endure within herself continual outbursts of the evil passions in which her members had once indulged without a check; in spite of a thousand counterfeits, which sprung up around her and within her, claiming to be parts of her, and alluring men to themselves by that very exclusiveness and party arrogance which disproved their claim; in spite of all, she conquered. The very emperors arrayed themselves upon her side." *

But if Christianity at last sat upon the seat of the Cæsars, it was only because she succeeded in doing what the Cæsars had never been enabled to do; because she revived once more, in a form infinitely more pure, and with an authority more awful, those great principles which had been the very groundwork of Roman strength and power. She brought home to the hearts of men the belief in a Divine King,—an actual Ruler of the universe,—and of their own lives in the fatherhood of God, and that sanctity of human relationships which flows from and depends upon it. Thus, only amid the festering corruption of a dying world, was it possible that there should spring up again the old reverence for the family, and its natural corollary, the consciousness of a national life, which had given its greatness and vitality to republican Rome, and which was yet to inform the tumultuous chaos of the barbarian ages with a spirit of life, order, and nationality. So it came to pass that the weak things of the world confounded the strong; the Thought approved itself a mightier victor than the Sword; spiritual force triumphed over material force, not from the accident of a favourable opportunity, but from the necessity of the case. The Empire presented to the eye the external framework of a political body, but the framework inclosed no living soul. The Church was not as yet clothed with the palpable form of a polity, but she was animated by that vigorous

* Kingsley's Hypatia, Preface.

principle of life from which all polities derive their permanence and strength. Of this the illustrious author of the Decline and Fall appears to have been altogether insensible. The relative vitality of the two societies depended upon principles which he could not appreciate, or did not perhaps understand. Hence his famous theory of concurrent causes. When the great work of the elder Mr. Caxton, the "History of Human Error," is at last given to the public, it will assuredly contain a long chapter upon the delusions which a dogma, embodied in an epigram, has palmed off upon the unreflecting world.

With this may be contrasted the language of a later historian, who has approached the study of the same period in a very different spirit:—"Perfectly independent of Christianity, this Roman civilization might have been expected to be very decidedly hostile to it. It did not fail to be so. Abandoning, so far as she was concerned, its usual habits of politic toleration, the Roman society lavished upon Christianity contempt, outrage, and persecution. During three centuries, the Christian religion grew and expanded amid ignominy and penal tortures. Philosophers scoffed at, and politicians punished it; the populace pursued it with ferocious yells and homicidal clamour. The blood of martyrs stained the basements of the most beautiful buildings in Rome; the smoke from their funeral pyres begrimed the roofs." * Which statement is most in accordance with the facts? Let us examine the matter a little more closely.

It was the wise toleration, we are told, of the Roman religion which gave strength to the infancy of the new religion, and facilitated its diffusion. Now much has been idly said in praise of this Roman toleration by those who ought to have been better informed. It is one of those half-truths which are more pernicious than any positive falsehood. In a certain sense, Rome was tolerant, in another

* De Broglie, Introduction.

she was not; and her relations to Christianity illustrate the second disposition, not the first. Roman religion was a conglomerate, made up of compromises; her Pantheon a Republic of federate Divinities. It admitted any new cult which would coalesce with the recognized cults, and extend to them the indulgence which it had itself received. So far as the new candidate for favour was willing to share the honours bestowed upon its predecessors, reciprocate concessions, and accept a position of equality, so far would the religious policy of Rome regard it with indulgence. But a stern, unbending religious system, which would allow no compromise, and endure no amalgamation with existing systems, Rome altogether repudiated, and set herself resolutely to put down. That this was the religious policy even of the Republic, is plain from the passage of Livy prefixed to the present lecture. It was under the inspirations of this policy that she cruelly trampled out Judaism in Palestine, and Druidism in Gaul. Yet Judaism merited, and for a time obtained, more merciful consideration than the new faith; for Judaism, as even Voltaire has remarked, would not have the statue of Jove in the Temple of Jerusalem, but Christianity would have removed it from the Capitol of Rome. As soon, therefore, as Rome understood the true character of the Christian's belief, she turned upon him with greater ferocity than she had shown to either Jew or Celt. The story of the proposal of a Roman emperor to admit a statue of Christ into the Pantheon, whether true or not, marks the period when imperial authority was as yet uncertain about the nature of the new religion, and deemed that it might be dealt with like the numerous other superstitions which had passed into Italy from the East. The error was not of long continuance. Christianity was neither to be caressed nor coerced. Her bold proclamation of equality of rank and indifference of race, in the relations of man to God, was entirely opposed to that spirit of imperial absolutism

which had succeeded to the more constitutional government of Augustus. It was opposed alike to the instinct of the Roman and the policy of the statesman, to regard the barbarian and slave populations as in any way homogeneous with the real citizens of the capital. The proclamation to "barbarian, Scythian, bond and free," of universal fraternity, of liberty in Christ, and equality in the sight of a common Father, was certain to be misinterpreted by the narrow-minded men who directed the destinies of the Empire. All that intense and jealous dread of the slave population, which we have described in a previous lecture, was augmented and inflamed by the public assertion of such a principle, and its authors were visited with every penalty at the disposal of the government. The moral equality of the slave and the free man, in their perceptions, not unnaturally involved an equality in political rights; and the complete organization of the Christian society, extending from Syria to Spain, which their own persecutions developed and brought prominently into light, terrified the Roman officials with a dim, uneasy sense of a power around them, altogether alien from the imperial system, and capable of being employed to subvert it. For the Christian society, therefore, toleration was, for these reasons, impossible. It was impossible also, for another reason. What little religious sentiment and reverential observance still lingered in the heathenism of the Decadence, was directed, in a degree unintelligible to the modern mind, towards the person of the Emperor. "The political spirit of the ancient religions," says Professor Ranke, "displayed itself once again under a new aspect. All those self-governing powers that had once filled the world, had become absorbed in one concentrated whole. There remained but one sole power that could be called self-dependent. Religion acknowledged this when she decreed divine worship to the emperor. To him temples were built and sacrifices offered; vows were made in his name, and

festivals were solemnized in his honour; his statues gave the sacredness of a sanctuary to the place where they stood. The worship men paid to the genius of the emperor was, perhaps, the only one common to the whole Empire: all idolatries accommodated themselves to this, for to all it offered countenance and support."*

Now, between Christianity and Cæsar-worship there could be no compromise. To burn incense upon the altar of the emperor was a direct abnegation of the divinity of Christ. Nay, even to swear by the emperor's fortune, was repugnant to the feelings of the Christians, and they refused to do it, fearing lest they might recognize thereby some demon or profane divinity. The Church was ready to render unto Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's, for such had been the express injunction of her Divine Lord. But now Cæsar had come to claim the things that were God's, and the Church resisted to the death. It is a notorious fact, and one which casts a flood of light upon the whole question, that it was for the insult to the emperor's divinity, implied by his refusal to make an offering on the emperor's altar, that the Christian of the early centuries suffered the pains and wore the crown of martyrdom. Long before this, the cunning of the Pharisee, sharpened by hatred, had foreseen the necessary antagonism between the "King of the Jews" at Jerusalem and the emperor on the Palatine. The insidious warning, "If thou lettest this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend," was prompted by the certainty that the co-existence of the two powers was impossible, and that the Roman government must soon become cognizant of the fact.

If the new religion was unpopular in the court, it was also not likely to be received with complacency in the schools. Philosophy was as much its enemy as imperialism; for it was a protest, and a most offensive protest, against the very notions which philosophy held most dear. We cannot,

* History of the Popes; Preface.

indeed, include in a single class the ancient philosophies, and speak of them, as some have done, in terms of common and comprehensive condemnation, without exhibiting a very ridiculous and ignorant presumption. But it would scarcely be incorrect to say that they had one element in common, to which the doctrines of Christianity must have been singularly repulsive. All regarded the human will and intellect as competent, by their own action upon themselves, to work out the results of their several systems. Of a will radically depraved, of an intellect limited in the sphere of its action, they had almost no idea. To the conviction that neither will nor intellect could be directed to any good end without the overruling influence of a higher power, operating by a personal and individual communication of itself, they were altogether strangers. It may be doubted whether the doctrine of "grace" ever penetrated into a heathen intellect. It must certainly have been entirely repugnant to the feeling, and alien from the habit of thought, existing among those philosophers whom the Gospel encountered within the precincts of the Empire. As at Athens, so elsewhere, Philosophy, with few exceptions, had settled down into a Stoic or Epicurean type, with perhaps, in some cases, a leaning to Academic doctrines. But if a man was a Stoic, Christianity mercilessly humiliated his pride; if he was an Epicurean, it no less mercilessly stripped him of his pleasures. If, again, he was a Platonist, it plainly asserted the foolishness of his wisdom, and cast down the great idol of his imagination,—an ideal perfection only to be reached by a mystic abstraction from all those human relations which were now, for the first time, receiving their true interpretation and value in the Kingdom of God. The Stoic and Epicurean conceptions of God, and moral duty, and human life, were still more at enmity with the spirit of the Gospel. The God of the Stoic was the great "mundane Soul," into which the souls of men, if their purification had been suc-

cessful and complete, were re-absorbed, to the annihilation of their individual essence. He could not, therefore, regard, without abhorrence, the doctrine of a personal God, the Father and Ruler of men, revealing himself in His Son, and winning to himself the individual soul by actual operation of His Spirit upon the spirit of man. The conduct enjoined by the Stoic theory of life and duty, rendered needful the annihilation of those very affections and principles of action which the Christian was to cherish and bring to perfection. The unreality, the want of living and practical truth, which lay hidden beneath the majestic garb of the Philosophy, was at once exposed, when brought into contact with the vivid reality, the actual visible power, which was seen of all men in the Religion; and the idea of any agreement, compromise, or truce between the two, is absurd. By a strange mockery of fortune, it fell to the lot of Stoicism to speak its last word from a throne. Nothing could have more strongly exhibited its impotence, when brought face to face with that other word, which, from caves, and catacombs, and the despised places of the earth, was about to assert a dominion over the hearts and lives of all men.

The relations of Christianity to the theoretic Epicureanism of the schools were at least equally antagonistic. Far as this was removed from the vulgar sensualism which assumed, and has retained, the name, it was still further removed from the doctrine of Christ and His apostles. The indifferent gods of Epicurus were as thoroughly opposed to the God of the Gospel revelation, as the impersonal God of the Stoics; and the cosmogony of the system, as we have it in the brilliant pages of Lucretius, results in a pure atheism. And although the perfection of the moral life was not made to consist in an apathy or annihilation of the moral nature, the philosophic votaries of the Garden sought it in a complacent and self-satisfied frame of mind, undisturbed by any such agitations as must attend upon erring creatures in a

probationary state. There is, also, no reason to believe that they held the immortality of the soul, or the possibility of its separation from the body. It is, therefore, needless to point out that a philosophy which rested on these grounds, cannot have been tolerant of a religion which taught the creation of matter, the special Providence of God, the regulation of the affections by moral discipline, and the doctrine of a future life. In a word, it argues but a superficial acquaintance with the temper of ancient philosophy, to imagine that it could have heard with any feelings but those of extreme irritation and impatience, the uncompromising proclamation of the Gospel, "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise: for the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God."* "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." "In the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God. Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?"† Nor was it long before the hostility of the philosophers practically displayed itself in scornful and malignant criticism. Celsus, the semi-Platonist, and Lucian, the Epicurean, may be taken as types of the class. They possess the involuntary merit of having elicited the earliest efforts of Christian literature, —the "Apologies." When, therefore, Gibbon spoke of the philosophers' indifference to all religions, he was thinking of himself, and judging antiquity by the standard of his own sentiments. No process could be more unphilosophical or incorrect.

But were the hatred and contempt of the powerful and of the wise compensated by the affection of the vulgar? Certainly not; and for the plainest reasons. The theoretical Epicureanism of the schools was, after all, less bitterly adverse to Christianity than the practical Epicureanism of common life. The masses were eminently sensual; the Church set

* 1 Cor. iii. 18, 19. † 1 Cor. i. 19.

herself sternly against sensuality in every shape. Lust, gluttony, drunkenness, and all the abominable debasements in which heathenism wallowed and revelled, were branded by her as accursed things, and forbidden under penalty of the eternal fire. The masses were eminently idle, not living by the labour of their own hands, but by the indulgence of a government which pandered to their worst passions, because it could not check them, and deemed it a political necessity to demoralize those classes which it must otherwise have been compelled to fear. And the masses *were* demoralized, sunk, says the Roman poet, so far as to have no thought save for the wants of the body and the lust of the eye,—"Panem et Circenses,"—the daily largess of bread, and the bloody spectacles of the circus. The Church told them that idleness was crime, that he who would not work was not fit to live, and that the pleasures for which they sold their liberty and their manhood, were cruel and guilty pleasures, an abomination in the eyes of the righteous God, who is Judge of all the earth. Lastly, the masses were eminently under the influence of certain classes of men, who obtained a livelihood by pandering to their sensual tastes and superstitious fears. Against all such,—priests, idol-makers, magicians, astrologers, soothsayers, votaries of foreign mystic rites, fortune-tellers, slave-mongers, gladiators, and courtesans, the Church declared open and irreconcilable war. Yet not with impunity. The tumultuous scene at Ephesus was repeated all over the Empire. Calumny of the most atrocious kind inflamed the popular exasperation against the Christian community. Truly, the sect "was everywhere spoken against." Its most innocent practices and its most holy things were traduced by the vilest misrepresentations. The ordinary expressions of Christian affection among a brotherhood whose bond was love, were branded with an ignominy which Paganism could only derive from its own polluted conceptions; the commemorative feast of the

Eucharist, where bread and wine represented the flesh and blood of Christ, was believed by the excited imagination of the vulgar to be a real cannibal banquet, in which the body of a freshly-murdered child was devoured by the votaries of this "new and horrible superstition." Even Gibbon himself, speaking of the Christians, admits "the impatient clamours of the multitude demanded, with irresistible vehemence, that they should be instantly apprehended." This, then, was their true position with respect to the great mass of the population among whom they moved; and the savage shout of "Christianos ad leones," "the Christians to the lions," again and again repeated with horrible unanimity, seems to corroborate the statement of a contemporary historian, that "they were held in hatred and abhorrence by the human race." *

In thus briefly describing the position of Christianity with reference to the court, the schools, and the populace, we have partly fulfilled the proposed design of considering its relations to the old society into which it was born. There are, however, some particulars, not contained in this enumeration, which nevertheless deserve our notice. These we shall make no attempt to exhaust. One or two must serve as specimens of the rest. We have already said, and it cannot be too often repeated, that the germ and formal type of the national life is to be found in the family. In the purity, therefore, the inviolability, and the dignity of the institution upon which the family depends, is involved the character of the national life itself. From a polluted fountain none but polluted waters flow. A wrong conception of the nature of the marriage tie, and the relations which arise from it, vitiates the whole outgrowth of the society, and finally dissolves its coherence, by poisoning the very flesh and fibres of the body politic. This is precisely what occurred in Roman society. It is true that, in the earlier

* Tacitus.

ages of the Republic, marriage was both more elevated in conception, and more pure in practice, than anywhere else in the ancient world. Still it involved a principle which was sure, in a more licentious age, to bring about its own corruption and the demoralization of the State—the principle of inequality between the contracting parties, as evinced in the entire subordination of the wife to the authority of the husband. The master of the family exercised a despotic and irresponsible power over his children and his slaves; nor was his wife in this respect more favourably situated than a slave or child. Her natural instincts, therefore, towards freedom of action could only be indulged by the assumption of an illegal license, which being, under the circumstances, immoral, soon led the way to real immorality; an immorality which became most frightful licentiousness, when the timid handmaid of the republican household became the pampered and intriguing matron of the Empire. Against this view of wedlock, and the relations flowing from it, Christianity entered the strongest possible protest, not only in her theoretical teaching upon the subject, but in the actual examples openly exhibited to the world by the constitution of the Christian family. There, the wife, placed upon a moral equality with the husband, and sharing in the paternal authority over the children, offered a strange spectacle to Roman eyes, which were inclined to misinterpret her freedom of action and to be offended by her personal independence. The result was, indignation mingled with some degree of disquiet at the nature of the new doctrines. "Christianity," they scornfully said, "is a religion for women."

If the pagan mind could not rise to the Christian conception of marriage, still less was it able to understand the merit which the Christian society had by this time begun to attach to a condition of celibacy. The qualified and conditional praise of St. Paul had been exaggerated to a degree

which inflamed the imagination of enthusiastic persons of either sex. A life consecrated to God, and so divested of the cares, and, in some part, of the perils which waited upon common life, became the favourite aspiration of multitudes in the Christian community. The veiled Virgin, the desert Anchorite, and the priest, vowed to a closed heart and single life, were objects of the most profound respect, almost of adoration. Their examples were highly extolled and widely imitated. Of this the Roman could understand nothing. It contradicted all his instincts, all his traditions, his most firmly-fixed notions of right and wrong, his whole theory of the duties of citizenship. The first duty of a Roman was to supply sons to Rome. This was a principle which long survived the decay of many cognate patriotic principles in an unpatriotic age. It was asserted in the "Jus trium liberorum;" it was revived by imperial legislation: the contrary principle appeared, not only to legists, but to common men, mere insanity in the individual and treachery to the State. And yet this contrary principle entered very deeply into the Christianity of the age. Its developments were then, as now, most important in determining the relations of the Church to the world, and securing its influence over the vulgar, by separating itself from the sphere of their ordinary habits and ideas.

It is scarcely conceivable to a modern mind, how large a portion of the life of the heathen was absorbed by the dramatic representations of the theatre, and the more repulsive exhibitions of the circus. Springing originally from their religious instincts, these observances became a large part of their religious system, and from their accordance with the most active appetites and passions of human nature, eventually engrossed the greater part of their ordinary existence. But in the process, as often happens, the meaning and purpose of the institution were forgotten, or very dimly remembered, by the masses, while its external

splendours held their senses in subjection. The character of such institutions is ever a faithful reflex of their age. They act upon popular tastes and opinions, and are, in turn, reacted upon themselves. The drama of Elizabeth and that of Charles II. reflect, as in a glass, the "very form and body" of the Elizabethan age and the great anti-Puritan reaction. The licentiousness and cruelty of what was by courtesy called the Roman people of imperial Rome, called forth the butcheries of the circus and the debauchery of its precincts, and these daily scenes of lust and blood fostered and fed high the horrible instincts from which they sprang. It is quite needless to pursue a revolting subject on which we have already enlarged; but we cannot understand the position of the Christian, in respect of the society beside him, unless we fully realize the absorption of this society in that which was an abomination to his eyes. Nor, again, can we estimate, without the same conviction, the strength of the antagonism with which the Church had to contend, or the almost utter hopelessness of any attempt, upon her part, to repress the evil. It was not until she mounted the imperial throne with Constantine, that she succeeded in obtaining any authoritative prohibition of the most offensive parts of these celebrations; and even then, the timid and hesitating tone of the imperial rescript shows that the resolute soul of Constantine himself quailed before the possible effects of this interference with pursuits to which the multitude were so passionately devoted. The feelings of the Christian, upon a matter so repugnant to the spirit of his religion, may easily be conjectured. Yet we are not left to the guidance of mere conjecture. A very singular document, which still remains to us,—"Tertullian de Spectaculis," embodies the sentiments of at least the stricter teachers of the Church with respect to a practice which was so firmly established among the institutions of the Empire, and constituted so large an element of heathen life. The "spectacles," in the

judgment of the "fervid African," originated in the worship of devils, and were maintained in the interest of devils. They were the nursery of every crime, the direct contradiction of every Gospel precept which Christians were bound to observe. "Si sævitiam, si impietatem, si feritatem permissam nobis contendere possumus, eamus in amphitheatrum."* He closes a passionate denunciation of the guilt and cruelty daily displayed in the theatre and circus, by a picture of the spectacle hereafter to be disclosed by the great and terrible Assize, when those who on earth had exulted in the blood of martyrs, should be seen writhing in the penal torments of eternal fire. This is painful language, and would doubtless excite among the men of the nineteenth century, according to their personal religious sentiments, repugnance or contempt; and we are not prepared to deny the legitimacy of these feelings in a modified form. But if we ourselves possess that charity, the want of which excites such natural indignation, we must distinguish between the trials of the Christian, whose religion sits in high places and hears soft words, and the persecutions of the convert, who had seen brethren, children, or wife, rent piecemeal by beasts of prey, and lived himself in the perpetual presence of the axe, the torture, and the fire. Be our judgment, however, of these things what it may, we shall scarcely fail to see that, in "the Spectacles," as they are generically called, of the old Roman régime, lay one of its strongest contrasts and antagonisms to the new faith.

Another Roman, or, more correctly speaking, heathen institution, brought out this contrast in an equal degree; the practice, that is to say, of personal slavery. It would be altogether untrue to assert, that during the earlier centuries there was any direct interference, upon the part of the Church, with the institution as it legally subsisted. The touching letter of St. Paul to the master of Onesimus, and

* Tertullian de Spectaculis, cap. 19.

indeed, the whole tenor of the Apostolic Epistles, where they approach the topic, contradict any such supposition. What is still more decisive of the question, is the undoubted fact, that Christian proprietors of slaves did not emancipate them, even when examples of emancipation were very common and very popular. It is no less true, however, that the spirit of Christianity is directly opposed to slavery, and that by the subtle but sure operation of indirect influences, the Church eventually accomplished its abolition. The moral equality established by its laws between those who had hitherto been separated by an impassable gulf, in the daily relations of life, paved the way towards that social equality, which, however imperfectly realized, is, after all, the main distinction between the ancient and the modern world. Once a week at least, if not more often, the slave sat beside his master, joining in a common worship, sharing in common privileges, and sensible that he, too, was heir to that liberty with which Christ had made his people free. Thus the most ignominious stain of his hard condition was wiped away. He was no longer a mere chattel, a *thing*, without a place in the social scale, and without civil rights; he became a man, with the responsibilities and the duties of a man,—a citizen, not indeed of an earthly city, but of one eternal in the heavens. Here, then, was a vast social revolution, slowly fermenting beneath the mass of moral and material confusion into which ancient society had collapsed. But it was a revolution which struck at the very root of the whole system, upon which "the cause of order and religion," in the imperial sense of the words, had been for centuries rendered sacred and maintained. It was very unlikely, therefore, that the relations of the Christians to their slaves, and the logical consequences of these relations, should long escape the scrutiny of eyes whose sight was sharpened by jealousy and fear. We have already described the almost ridiculous alarm with which every association of the proletarian classes, and more

particularly of the slaves, was regarded by the functionaries of the imperial government. Even Trajan,* one of the wisest and calmest politicians of the Decadence, carried this alarm so far as to regard with suspicion all guilds (collegia), or societies of workmen, though for such an innocent purpose as the extinction of fires. He is said, moreover, to have repressed wedding-banquets, and other meetings for domestic festivity. Not only, therefore, was the liberal theory of Christianity, in respect of the poor man and the slave, regarded as revolutionary and socialist in the sense with which we are familiar with that much misused term, but Christianity itself, to the eyes of a jealous despotism, presented the aspect of one vast secret society, whose ramifications extended from the most distant frontier post to the metropolis, and from the Catacombs to the waiting-chambers of the imperial palace.

The same conclusion must also have been drawn from one other very remarkable social aspect of the time, which owed its origin and development to the presence of Christianity. We are all probably familiar with the remark of Paley respecting the institution of hospitals and similar charitable foundations by the piety of the early members of the Christian Church, and we are all, perhaps, not indisposed to admit the inferences which he has drawn from the fact. But the subject has scarcely as yet received its full consideration, as a political phenomenon, with a very important bearing upon the question before us, the relations of the Church to the Empire and the age. In truth, charity, as taught and practised by the Church, was not only an unknown conception, but also a very difficult and disagreeable problem to the rulers of the old régime, who had to deal with its first positive developments. An accurate investigation of ancient literature, particularly that of Greece, might tend to

* See the correspondence between Pliny and Trajan,—Plin. Ep. lib. x.

show, that the practice of public and private charity, so far as it related to the relief of poverty and pain, was not utterly unknown among the best of heathen societies. But heathen society, as we have to deal with it in imperial Rome, had greatly degenerated from its highest type. If we except some vague declamation of the Stoics, which was probably itself derived second-hand from Christian sources, we shall find nothing in the literature, the state policy, or the state religion of the Decadence, which exhibits the slightest recognition of charity as a social duty, or the most trifling provision for its practice. The spectator who gazed upon the magnificent assemblage of buildings which clothed the sides and filled up the intervals of the Seven Hills, beheld temples and triumphal arches, porticos, theatres, libraries, and baths,—all the splendid appliances of an old civilization, crowding one after another upon his eyes; but of those other buildings, which in our modern cities, to use the beautiful language of Edmund Burke, "tower to heaven like electric conductors, to avert the wrath of God,"—of hospitals, infirmaries, asylums, penitentiaries, he would discover no trace. One edifice he might indeed descry, crowded with the sick and maimed,—the Temple of Æsculapius, upon an island in the Tiber; but no mission of mercy had conveyed its occupants to the spot. Exposed by their relatives or friends, who had become weary and hopeless of their cure—"tædio medendi," calmly observes the historian, they were left in solitude to struggle with the pangs of death. It would be easy to show, at some length, were this our special subject, that the practice of the Christian Church exhibited a contrast to this inhumanity, which soon most powerfully affected the public mind. The warning addressed by its Divine Founder to the unmerciful, evidently bore fruit from the earliest times. "Depart from me, ye cursed; for I was hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in;

naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not: for inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me." Accordingly, we find the heathen recording with surprise, the zeal, the activity, the self-denial, exhibited by the Christians in their charitable efforts to relieve distress. "Incredible," says even the scoffing Lucian, in that curious narrative of the fortunes of one who was once a Christian convert,*—"incredible is the haste which they exhibit when anything of the kind occurs. They spare nothing that they have." But perhaps the most remarkable testimony to their charity is that afforded by their bitterest enemy, Julian the Apostate.† "Build," he writes to a pagan priest, "numerous places of refuge and entertainment for strangers, in every city; for it is a disgrace that these impious Galileans, besides their own people, should support ours also, while ours are seen of all men to perish, without any assistance from us." The injunction of the emperor was very politic, and very well justified by the facts. The Church fed the starving populace in crowds, whether members of her own society or not. We hear of a Christian bishop‡ who, in the third century, supported from fifteen hundred to two thousand poor. Such a man must have been a dangerous subject for a despotism; indeed, a despotism like that of the later Cæsars, alarmed as it was by much less startling demonstrations, must have regarded the whole system as one great intrigue, maintained with secret and most sinister designs.

Despite, however, these grave and radical grounds of opposition between the Christian Church and the old society, it was long before the latter, by any overt act, or open remonstrance, placed itself in a position of direct hostility to the former. No attempt was made to interfere with poli-

* Lucian de Morte Peregrini, tom. iii. p. 336.

† Julian, Ep. 49, ad Arsacium Pontificem.

‡ Euseb. Hist. Ecc. vi. 43.

tical measures, to alter existing institutions, or even to resist secular tyranny. The mission of Christianity was understood to be a reformation of morals, not a reformation of laws. A considerable time elapsed before the intimate connection between the two questions was positively asserted, or, indeed, could be made the ground of any practical efforts. A patient submission to existing authority characterized the Christian in the midst of his severest trials, under whatever shape they assailed him. The apostolic injunction seems to have sunk deeply into his heart, and regulated his relations with the civil power :—"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers : for there is no power but of God : the powers that be, are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." * No soldier fought more faithfully than the Christian for the honour of the imperial eagles, by the Euphrates or the Rhine ; no subject more honestly contributed his substance to the oppressive taxation which went to swell the imperial exchequer. The fact was well known, and was not without its results. It modified the measures directed against the new faith, and obtained for it a toleration, partial and fitful it is true, but still a toleration which was of the utmost importance to its welfare, or rather to its existence. If a persecution is to be successful, its motto must be "Thorough!" It is a mistake to believe that religious truth can never be trampled out : we have melancholy evidence to the contrary in the sanguinary triumph of Simon de Montfort and the Catholic barons in Languedoc; in the massacres of the Cevennes and the dragonnades of Louis XIV. ; in the action of the Spanish Inquisition ; in the relentless persecutions of Protestantism by the house of Austria, not even as yet fully revealed upon the page of history. But the imperial persecutions of the two first cen-

* Romans, xiii. 1, 2.

turies were by no means "thorough." They were irregular and intermittent. After the severest blows, the persecuted society had time to draw breath and recover itself, though in catacombs and caves of the earth. The great Cæsars of the second century seem to have been affected by a singular hesitation and wavering of purpose when they had to deal with the strange phenomenon which Christianity presented to their eyes. When it appeared as a political difficulty, their irritation was excessive, and their edicts stern and sanguinary enough; yet, in the execution of these edicts, a remarkable tolerance was shown, which sometimes assumed almost an official character. The often-quoted correspondence between Trajan and Pliny is an illustration of this. The calamities of the age had themselves given strength and development to the Christian Church, by showing the hollowness of the rival system. A period of distress, humiliation, and defeat, found but little solace in a religion which seemed to have been made for the pride of empire and of war. The woes of the present life naturally sought their recompense in a faith which promised another and a better life; and thus the Church attracted to herself the degraded, the suffering, and the wronged. But it was of these that society in the main consisted. They became Christians, or not unfavourable to the Christians, for Christianity alone brought comfort to their afflictions and hope to their despair. In the mean time, it had lived down calumny and vindicated its claim to wisdom; for the course of events was daily verifying the prophetic warnings it had given. In the correspondence to which we have referred, this gradually increasing weight of public opinion in favour of the Christian doctrines seems to have oppressed the emperor's mind, and to have embarrassed his policy. He has recourse to those half-measures which assert no principle, and never bring any success. The rescripts of Adrian and the Antonines are conceived in precisely the same spirit.

Marcus Aurelius showed greater severity; but it was a severity limited by existing laws. Upon the observance o these he resolutely insisted; but he did not go out of his way to devise new and ingenious expedients for exterminating the obnoxious sect. With the third century came real persecution, sweeping, sanguinary, and relentless. But it was too late. The Church had by this time acquired powers, both active and passive, which no machinery that could be now devised had the least chance of extinguishing. Rome was at last aroused to a sense of her failing strength and her coming peril. The astute politicians and soldiers who were called in rapid succession to administer the affairs of the Empire, saw no hope of its regeneration, except by a revival of the old spirit; and this they idly thought could be done by reviving the old religious traditions. Of these traditions Christianity was the avowed and victorious enemy. Against Christianity, therefore, they directed their efforts, not in a spirit of mere casual animosity, or even of fanatic rage, but with a steady and inexorable purpose of extermination; and yet they failed. Christians were to be found everywhere: they were marched in troops to the human shambles, from the legions, from the provincial cities, from the offices of the imperial executive, from places of trust and dignity in Rome itself, from the very chambers of the imperial palace, and still their number was inexhaustible. And, what was yet more important, a regular system of Church organization and government had sprung up upon the basis of that world-wide civil administration which the Empire had so elaborately framed.

This was particularly the case in those localities menaced, or already invaded, by the barbarians; for in these it was the only organization, social or political, which survived the disintegration of the old society. Here, then, and generally in all places remote from the central power, that state of things began to obtain, which after-

wards universally prevailed. The officers of the Church acquired the sympathy and respect of the people, and gradually a predominant influence over their minds, because in most places these officers had sprung from and belonged to their own body; because they were ready to aid and console them under the fiscal tyranny of the government; because, when the ministers of this tyranny gradually disappeared, from positive incapacity to exercise their functions, or from fear of the barbarian sword, they alone stood in the breach to represent the name and glory of Rome, or to perish in an heroic defence of their people. This state of things, it is true, was but beginning when the old Roman party, under Decius, obtained the supreme direction of affairs; but it profoundly irritated their instincts, and impeded their efforts to restore the old pagan spirit, to which alone they looked for the salvation of society. This is the secret of the violence exhibited by Decius and the colleagues of Diocletian. The emperors of oriental extraction, as Philip and Alexander Severus, may have had—indeed there are not wanting facts which induce us to believe they really had—some sympathies with a faith whose birthplace was in the East. At any rate, they were inspired with no fanaticism for the old gods and the old worship of Italy. It was not so with the men who succeeded them. They hated the Christian as a traitor and an enemy; and could the sword or the axe have slain the religion, as it slew thousands upon thousands of its professors, Christianity would not have survived the crisis. Their opposition was not confined to the sword; they attempted a counter-revolution of a spiritual sort. They set up impostors, as in the case of Apollonius of Tyana, to rival the Divine Founder and Teacher of the Church. They even imitated its external organization, and established a species of parochial Paganism, with priests and pontiffs, in the remote districts of the Empire. Their propagandism was as unsuccessful as their persecution. Diocletian, wearied

and disgusted by the fruitless results of a cruel policy, to which he had been, from the first, personally disinclined, quitted Rome for ever as a royal residence, and thus, by abandoning the field to the Christians and their bishop, was, perhaps, the first to lay the foundations of that new power which eventually overshadowed the world. Galerius, his colleague, the real author of the greater part of the evil wrought in his reign, attacked by a horrible and mysterious disease, quailed before what he believed to be the vengeance of the Christian's God, and penned, in language half-insolent, half-deprecatory, that celebrated edict which may be regarded as the practical admission of Paganism that it was powerless against the rival which it had so long endeavoured to crush. The accession of Constantine inverted the relative position of the parties. Henceforward we contemplate the protracted struggles of Heathenism to arrest its own downfall, as we have hitherto been contemplating the struggles of Christianity to rise and emerge to light. Yet there is one misconception against which we must carefully guard. It has been the object of Gibbon and others of his school to represent Constantine as the founder, almost as the creator, of the Christian Church. They would have us believe that the imperial favour called the institution into existence, gave to it, for the first time, the solidity and cohesion of an establishment, and by this means propagated its rites and doctrines throughout the Empire. No hypothesis could be more contradictory to the general analogies of history, or more inconsistent with the ascertained facts of the case. This is a statement which is, of course, valueless as an assertion: it can only be sustained by a careful examination of the records from which we derive our knowledge of the era. Let me, therefore, quote the conclusions of one who has made such an examination with care, and given us the means of satisfying ourselves as to its exactness:—"It would seem, from a review of the details we have exhibited, that before the accession of Con-

stantine, or at any rate before the favour he manifested for the Gospel could have produced any effect on the dispersion of it over the world, it had established itself in Spain, France, Britain, Germany, Scythia, Dacia, Sarmatia, Italy, Greece, the islands of the Mediterranean, the whole of Asia, from the Ionian Sea to the Euxine, Palestine, and the bordering countries eastward, Mesopotamia and the Elamites, the whole of the northern part of the continent of Africa, stretching far inland,—the testimony of one or other of the Fathers prior to Constantine bearing witness to these facts, —its possession of these regions being, no doubt, in some instances more, in some less complete; but the whole of them covering a surface which would bear no unfavourable comparison with that occupied by Christianity even at this moment, America being left out of the reckoning, and several of those regions even far more effectually occupied by it then than at present." *

Constantine, therefore, in no sense *created* the organization of the Christian Church; in no sense is he to be regarded as the inventor of its polity, or even as the great human cause of its establishment in the old Roman world. What he did was to supply opportunity; and the material assistance afforded by the protection of the imperial name, for the further development of an institution already existing,—of a "Christian corporation,"—"Corporis Christianorum," as he himself expressed it in the edict of Milan. Probably, also, though the story of his "dotation"—"the fatal dower of Constantine"—is now abandoned even by Roman controversialists, he considerably increased the temporal resources of the Church, by gifts of lands, houses, and moneys, in a form more correspondent to other modern benefactions of the same sort; and it is an undoubted fact, that the actual framework of the imperial executive government served as the framework upon which the ecclesiastical government

* Blunt's Church in the Three First Centuries, ch. x. *ad finem.*

was conducted; nor could this have been made valid and operative without the consent of the supreme authority. The existing civil divisions of the Empire were admirably adapted to the purposes of a spiritual society anxious to avail itself of the readiest means of intercommunication, and the best method of locally classifying its people. They were, therefore, at once adopted by the rulers of the Church. The seven dioceses of the old régime not only gave their name to the new ecclesiastical divisions, but the limits of both exactly coincided. These seven dioceses included some hundred and eighteen provinces, and these were made similarly available. Each province of course contained several cities of importance, with the lands attaching to them. These were called *παροικίαι*, or parishes, a Greek name properly applicable to those who dwelt in proximity to one another. The Church system accepted the arrangement, and has perpetuated the use of the term. The English rustic little dreams that in the use of this familiar word, he is recalling the territorial arrangements of that forgotten Empire which once ruled the world. Yet so it is, and the same associations are connected with all the great officers of the Church. To the parochial cities were attached bishops, to the provinces metropolitans, to the dioceses patriarchs. But the real nature of the change introduced by Constantine, and of its results, may best be estimated—perhaps can only be estimated —by a careful comparison of the edict of Galerius, just mentioned, and the famous edict of Milan. In the first, Christianity was barely tolerated as a sectarian superstition, and that toleration was so evidently the result of terror, that a change in the emperor's temper or circumstances would inevitably have restored the old persecution. In the second, it was placed on a par with the old religion of the state,—not *substituted for it*, according to a very common impression. Christians and "all others" were to be permitted, in all liberty, to follow the religion they preferred;

"it appertained to the tranquillity of the times, that all should adopt the religion they liked best" (in colendo quod quisque diligeret, liberam haberet facultatem"). It is true that special favour was shown to the Christians. But this had reference to past persecution and injustice: their confiscated property was to be restored, or made good by the imperial treasury. If the actual holders desired indemnity, they were to apply to the prefect of their province, and their case would graciously be taken into consideration. Christian places of worship were to be rebuilt, and all appertaining to them guaranteed for the future against spoliation. The effect of the edict was immense. A cry of joy went up from every corner of the Empire. Emerging from the catacombs, from the cemeteries, and the desert places, whither they had fled from the murderous violence of the populace, or the more systematic butcheries of the law, multitudes of every age and sex crowded the towns and cities, filling them with the praises of the God who had wrought this signal deliverance of his elect. Upon the ruins of their humble chapels arose edifices of great magnificence and size. Everywhere assemblages of bishops were to be seen congratulating the Church upon her escape from past perils, and deliberating about her future fortunes; everywhere the sounds of the celebration of the divine service were to be heard; everywhere the people crowded to participate in the divine mysteries.* Nor was this great external change in the social aspect of the Empire unaccompanied by modifications in the character of its policy and administration. The governing power of the civil society found itself brought into the closest relations with the governing power of the religious society, as questions arose which required their common action. The bishops of necessity became a kind of privy council to the emperor. The troubles in the African Church, and the prominent part taken by Constantine in the

* Eusebius, x. 1, 3.

suppression of the Donatist heresy, drew the bonds of this connection closer still, and definitively committed the State to a line of policy determined by the circumstances of the Church. The great Arian schism, and the council of Nice, completed what the African controversy had begun. It would be an interesting subject of inquiry to ascertain the exact nature of the influence which this fact exercised upon the spirit of Roman legislation and government. Unfortunately, it is not a matter which can be treated in a parenthesis. Indeed, it requires a more enlarged and special examination than it has as yet, at least in English literature, received. One thing is certain; it must have acted as a stimulant upon the imperial mind; for how, otherwise, can we account for the prodigious activity with which Constantine pursued the task of legislation, even while hurrying through Europe from Constantinople to Trèves. No less than eighty "imperial constitutions" mark the five years (315—321) which followed the final overthrow of Licinius; and doubtless the majority of these were tinctured with the new ideas.

How did these operate? Generally, we may say, in two ways—by mollifying the sanguinary spirit of the old laws, as manifested in their penalties and pains, and again, by visiting with retribution a class of offences which the purer judgement of Christian morality found itself compelled to classify as crimes. "The civil law," says M. de Broglie, "following in the footsteps of the Gospel, became less rigorous, but more severe. It condemned more frequently, but punished more mercifully. We see it, alternately, as one or other of these dispositions predominated, assuming greater strictness or greater leniency."* He goes on to give several illustrations of the fact. We will content ourselves with one or two. Capital punishment might not be inflicted without the confession of the accused, or without entire uniformity in the

* L'Eglise et l'Empire Romain, vol. i. p. 297.

evidence of the accusers.* The condemned were not to be branded upon the forehead; for in the image of God was man created, and to destroy this image is a crime.† A special rescript was directed against the horrible practice of infanticide, then common, as we learn from the terms of the law, in all the cities of Italy.‡ The imperial officers were even further enjoined to see that parents did not cause the death of their children by neglect, or sell them under the pressure of poverty.§ Prison regulations of a humanity hitherto unknown, were to be adopted in all the provinces; dark and unwholesome dungeons, bad enough for the guilty, were intolerable for the innocent. But, on the other hand, a new, and, as it must have seemed to the multitude, an incomprehensible severity, regulated the relations of the sexes. It was not enough to forbid altogether the common custom of concubinage in the married state. "It was not enough"—it is M. de Broglie who speaks—"to condemn to capital punishment the woman of free birth, who disgraced herself with a slave, and to send her accomplice to the stake. A law of the 19th of March, A.D. 320, passed with special reference to abduction, enters into details of severity which make one shudder. The seducer and his victim suffered the same penalty. If a domestic or nurse had acted as accomplice, molten lead was poured down her throat, to close that member which had given utterance to the evil counsel. The virgin who had resisted, was disinherited, as a punishment for the levity, or the want of resolution, which, it was thought, she must of necessity have exhibited. No compromise among the parents or the guilty parties could disarm the severity of the law." These were important changes in the spirit of the penal code. The revolution in the civil law was naturally more slow of accomplishment. In this, perhaps, more certainly than in most things, it is not possible to destroy the

* Cod. Theod. ix. tit. 40, l. 1.
† *Ibid.* l. 2.
‡ *Ibid.* ii. tit. 27, l. 1, 2.
§ *Ibid.* ix. tit. 4, l. 1.

work of a thousand years in a single day. Yet Constantine, in repealing the extravagant rights assigned to the male parent, and in conferring upon the junior members of the family the goods and chattels derived from the mother, not only struck a fatal blow at the fundamental principle of the Roman law of property, but he did so under the inspiration of Christian ideas, which based the unity of the family upon the natural affections and the innate sense of equity among its members. This remarkable change in law, respecting the family, was followed by another, which affected no less the social relation of the sexes. Celibacy had been regarded as disgraceful in the old society, because there it implied a contemptuous neglect of the first duties of a citizen, or a life of epicurean luxury, almost of the oriental type. Celibacy, therefore, had been visited with disabilities and fines. But among the professors of the new faith, the same estate was regarded, as we have said, with especial honour and affection. Accordingly, by a "constitution" dated in the early part of the year 319 A.D., all the penalties inflicted upon a single life were unconditionally repealed. These instances are of small relative importance, in comparison with that which follows. Slavery, the great plague-spot of ancient society, was too deeply rooted in its constitution, to be eradicated by any sudden remedy. It may be safely said, that all the notions, habits, existing institutions, cherished recollections and prejudices of heathen life, were inextricably mixed up with the existence of slavery, as a political necessity and a social practice. With all these, the spirit of the gospel now placed itself in open opposition. Constantine could only commence the struggle by indirect efforts to limit the evil itself, and mitigate its worst features.* In the first place, he made liberty imprescriptible. Not even sixty years of servitude were to abrogate the rights of free birth.† This was in the year 314 A.D. Two years after-

* Cod. Jus. tit. 22, l. 3. † *Ibid.* i. tit. 13, l. 1.

wards, by a rescript to a Christian bishop, he conferred upon the Church the right to liberate its slaves, in the presence of the whole congregation,—a fact which indisputably proves, that, hitherto, the practice of holding slaves had subsisted in the Church itself; and in a correspondence with the bishop of Cordova, every encouragement is given to churchmen to adopt this public emancipation. In another four years, enactments were passed still more favourable to those who asserted their freedom. Every assistance was legally afforded to the claimant, and no lapse of time, even after sentence passed, was allowed to operate as a bar against his claim, should the means of attaining fresh evidence be discovered.

It was not, however, until the battle of Adrianople had disposed of all his political difficulties, and the council of Nice, at which he presided, had thoroughly identified him with ecclesiastical legislation, that Constantine ventured to wipe away that other great stain upon the life of heathendom —the gladiatorial games. Indeed, this statement is too strong. The timid and hesitating tone of the imperial decree cannot, as we have already hinted, be regarded as the language of authoritative abolition. It prohibited the practice of condemning criminals to a profession which it incidentally stigmatized as incompatible with the new form of social life, rather than in formal terms forbade the practice altogether. Still it was an immense step in advance, more particularly as it was made by a man who had himself, some twenty years before, indulged the populace with an exhibition of gladiators in the circus.

One more social revolution of immense importance dates from the first alliance, or union, whichever it is to be called, of the Church and the civil power—the observance of the Sabbath as a political institution. Its observance, as the result of a religious dogma, is a different question, which it is beyond our province to discuss. But in the year 321 A.D. two imperial laws appeared, which prohibited, on "the revered

day of the Sun,"* all manual labour, and even the performance of any civil action whatsoever, except the manumission of a slave. The sole exception in favour of the necessary works of the agriculturist was probably suggested and justified by similar exemption accorded in the Gospel to him whose ass or whose ox had fallen into a pit on the sabbath day.

"So began," eloquently writes M. de Broglie, "that long struggle, doomed to endure for centuries, between the inveterate slavery of the Old World and the liberating spirit of the Gospel. By the two constitutions of Constantine (in favour of the emancipation of slaves), the Church was established, in a sort of official patronage, for the emancipation of the human race. . . . The sudden abolition of slavery would have starved the ancient world, which only subsisted on the products of its labour. It would have thrown upon the soil whole populations, without guides, without resources, and without the power of governing themselves,—multitudes of human beings equally destitute of the instincts of the animal and the intelligence of man. More than a single day was required to create and bring to maturity that principle of respect for self and for others, those sentiments of personal independence and dignity, which enable societies to exist by the free activity of its members. At this solemn moment the Church accepted from God and the hand of Constantine, the task of emancipating the world, without entirely subverting it. It is for modern society to say whether it has succeeded in the attempt."

Such, then, are some of the modifications which Christianity, upon its first connection with the imperial power, introduced into legislation and manners. Paganism had received its death-blow; but such was its tenacity of life,

* "Venerabili die Solis." It is, I think, quite impossible now to determine how far the epithet is a proof of the sanctity attached by Christians to the day, and how far it was the result of older heathen traditions and associations; or, again, how far the confusion may have been intentional on the part of the legislator.

that many a convulsive struggle on its part, and once an entire revival, was witnessed by the world. Constantine certainly never overcame it. His attempts to put down some of its most obnoxious practices were unsuccessful. Augury, divination, and similar rites, were too deeply rooted in the popular mind to be eradicated during his lifetime, more especially in the rural districts, or among the Pagani, whose name became identified with the old superstitions. Constantine was, therefore, compelled to repeal some of the more stringent regulations which he had passed, in the zeal of a neophyte, against them. Still, when the legionaries hailed him as Cæsar, they implored the protection of the immortal gods upon his head; still, upon some special occasions, the augurs observed the entrails of the victims, and affected to inform him of the will of Heaven; and what is even yet more extraordinary, he still himself assumed the title, and in part discharged the function, of Pontifex Maximus, or high priest. This was, on his part, and on that of some among his successors, a bowing of the knee in the house of Nisroch, a concession to the powerful senatorial interest, not unlike the conversion of Henry IV. As the great Béarnais believed that Paris was worth a mass, Constantine, in all probability, thought that Rome excused a sacrifice. Hence, at Rome, his language towards Polytheism was considerate, and even courteous. He did not forbid the old ceremonials; indeed, he dared not. Once only he rose above this timid and compromising policy, and refused to assist at the secular games. For this he was never forgiven by the Conscript Fathers and the still powerful faction which adhered to them. Zosimus, the pagan historian, a fair representative of the spirit of his party, heaps the bitterest reproaches on his head, and ascribes to this single act all the subsequent disasters of the Empire. Hence, we may form some slight idea of the difficulties with which he and the Christian Church had yet to deal. They had to contend

with an old aristocracy, rich, influential, and selfish, who derived a large proportion of their wealth and power from their official connection with the old religious system, its priesthoods, its dotations, its territorial possessions, its lavish and costly decorations, its vast array of subordinate ministers, clients, and slaves. Against all these things, Constantine appears to have despaired of fighting with success in their ancient stronghold upon Italian soil. He determined, therefore, that Byzantium should be the new capital of Christianity, while Rome remained, as heretofore, the central home and metropolis of the ancient faith. The "whirligig of time" has brought about few stranger revolutions than the result which this determination eventually produced. The abandonment of the imperial city to Paganism made it the birthplace of a power by which Paganism was annihilated, and the fortunes themselves of the Byzantine Church and Empire overshadowed and depressed. But neither in Rome nor in the East was the definite suppression of the old faith effected as yet. Two clauses of the Theodosian Code, which enforce the abolition of sacrifices and all similar superstitious rites, have been assigned to the son of Constantine. This is, however, now generally admitted to be a mistake,—a sort of pious fraud, prompted by the zeal of Christian copyists, who were anxious to antedate the triumph of the Church. Facts and inscriptions prove that no such edict could have been in force at this period. In the mean time, the proclamation of Julian as emperor at Paris,—a city doomed to be the birthplace of more than one apostasy, —resulted in a counter-revolution, which for a time undid the labours of his uncle, and threatened to arrest the political advance of Christianity. It was the ambition of this singular but able man to rehabilitate the faith of his fathers, in order to restore the glory of his country. But he was too acute not to perceive that the old Paganism was dead. He sought to revive it by breathing into the lifeless form

the spirit of a living philosophy. He only produced an unnatural monster, whose members must of themselves have collapsed, from the want of cohesion, had not his early death precipitated the catastrophe. Valentinian and Valens, who succeeded him, attempted at first to hold the balance between the rival religions with an even hand. Yet Valentinian, notwithstanding his professed liberality, tore up one of the most tenacious roots of the ancient faith, by prohibiting, as Constantine had tried to do, some of its superstitious accompaniments,—the arts of sorcery and divination, the interpretation of dreams, and other practices of the sort. This was to inflict a fatal blow upon Paganism, which now only subsisted upon the support received from augury. Paganism, therefore, resisted to the death, and had, though the fact is often denied, its martyrs as well as Christianity—an indication, truly, of a marvellous change in both the spirit and the fortunes of the new faith, when the Church stretched forth her hand to grasp the sword which had so often been wielded against herself. There was still material upon which to exercise her antagonism. Two barbarous authors of the time, Publius Victor and Rufus Festus, have left us a topographical catalogue of the buildings then found in Rome. She still possessed one hundred and fifty-two pagan temples, and one hundred and eighty-three chapels dedicated to different gods. Among them were the venerable shrines of Mars, Vesta, Romulus, Cæsar, and Victory. But their days were numbered. Gratian and Theodosius advanced far beyond the policy of their predecessors. To them may be ascribed the definite abrogation of the last privileges of Paganism, the confiscation of its property, and the denunciation of its symbols. The greater part of the work was undoubtedly wrought by the illustrious Ambrose of Milan, who exercised an unbounded influence over the youthful Gratian and the warlike Theodosius. Thirty-eight years after the death of Constantine, the whole edifice was

visibly crumbling to destruction; the altars were overthrown, the temples closed, the sacrifices abolished. These two men, of a thoroughly Roman type—Ambrose and Theodosius,—vigorous, energetic, and resolute men unlike any produced by the Eastern Church, with all its vast intellectual power and local advantages, were the real victors in the long struggle against the genius of ancient Rome. The expiring cry of the old cause was raised in language not entirely unworthy of its proud traditions, by Vettius Prætextatus, consul, pontiff, curial, and priest of Bacchus, with a dozen titles besides, upon the steps of the Capitol. It was in vain. The last grand man of Paganism disappeared. The world-renowned statue of Victory which adorned the Forum, the symbol of Rome's victorious fortunes, was displaced; nor could the eloquent pleadings of Symmachus, nearly the last man of letters, as Vettius was the last statesman of the old world, effect its restoration. The privileges and the property of the Vestals were swept away; a paltry provision for such of the pagan ceremonies as were still permitted to exist, was dealt out by imperial indulgence as an alms; and even this was not fated to be of long duration. For one brief moment, the expiring flame blazed up before the eyes of men. The semi-pagan "Protector" of the Empire, Arbogastes the Gaul, placed Eugenius, a wretched rhetorician of the old type, upon the throne. Once more the images of Hercules and Jupiter appeared on the ensigns of war; the temples opened their gates; the discrowned Divinities resumed their place; the blood of the victims gushed forth beneath the augur's axe; and Victory herself arose in the Roman Forum. Open menaces were heard that all ancient privileges were to be revived, all confiscations made good, and the Christian churches converted into stables. But it was an idle vaunt. Theodosius was already on his way from Asia, trampling beneath the feet of his victorious armies the idols and shrines of the expiring faith. Eugenius and his

A.D. 384.

A.D. 392.

people were not the men to resist that weighty sword. With them Paganism, for all practical purposes, fell completely, and for ever. We are assured by Prudentius that the Senate itself was converted. The conversion is most improbable; the outward and constrained pretence of it is not. When we speak of the entire downfall of Heathenism, we, of course, must only be understood to mean its public and official recognition. In the dark background of that singular age, in old senatorial houses, in retired rural districts, among the ignorant and turbulent proletarian masses of the Capital, the old traditions still lingered, with the old tastes and the old feelings, sometimes with the old practices, and, as might be expected, in a still mere deeply degraded form. From the literature, Polytheism never entirely died out. Indeed, it may be said to have retained possession of men's minds until the birth of the existing century. With the last great poet of the Decadence the accepted mythology ceased to be a religion and a reality, and became a species of poetical machinery, a repertory of ornament, which was ransacked at the revival of letters, and still displays before us its gaudy pictorial beauties in the *salons* of Versailles. Despite his obvious efforts, Claudian, the most pagan of poets, who may be said to be "plus Arabe, qu'en Arabie," has been unable to cast an air of truthfulness around his divinities and their dealings with mankind; his most sonorous periods fall as unmeaningly upon the ear as the mythologic conceits which were the fashion at the court of the grand "Monarque." The patient yet surely not obscure diligence of Niebuhr has rescued from forgetfulness one strain of sterner protest against the dethronement of all that constituted the glory and power of the past. But the voice which raised it did not belong to the degenerate race. The words of Maroboduns (Mehr-bode) have all the vigour of the free Teutonic forests from which he sprung. It is thus that he makes Discord address Bellona, while she urges the goddess of

Havoc to assail the apostate city, which had surrendered its ancient traditions to a mean and upstart superstition.

"Let fear her sons and senators appal,
When thou, dread Goddess, thund'rest at the wall,
Far from each temple's hospitable dome
And sheltering shrine, drive forth the Gods of Rome;
No more let holy Vesta's virgin choir
Feed on the altar-hearth th' eternal fire:
Myself, with treacherous wiles, afar will chase
The ancient manners of the ancient race,
Till in one undistinguish'd ruin lie
Faith, valour, truth, and Roman probity;
And thou, great God of Song, no more dispense,
From lips that scorn thee, Attic eloquence:
By blundering hazard, not by virtue great,
Let fools and knaves assume the reins of state;
Let each wild passion of the gloomy breast,
With lust of lucre in its fierce unrest,
Rage in those hearts where every vice has reign'd,
By thee, O Sovereign Jove, abandon'd and disdain'd."*

Constantine, therefore, we may say, elevated Christianity to an equality with the old religion; Gratian and Theodosius established its supremacy, and destroyed the possibility of all rivalry for the future on the part of that Paganism which they degraded and oppressed. Honorius withdrew even the small eleemosynary support which these emperors conceded

* This Maroboduns was a military commander of some eminence, and was honoured by a statue in Trajan's Forum. As I do not feel altogether assured of having caught the meaning of his obscure lines, I append the original, first published by Niebuhr:—

"Mœnia nulla tuos valeant arcere furores;
Roma ipsique tremant furialia murmura reges:
Tum superos terris atque hospita numina pelle;
Romanos populare deos, et nullus in aris
Vestæ exoratæ . . . . . palleat ignis.
His instructa dolis palatia celsa subibo.
Majorum mores, et pectora prisca fugabo
Funditus: atque simul, nullo discrimine rerum,
Spernantur fortes, nec sit reverentia justis,
Attica neglecto pereat facundia Phœbo:
Indignis contingat honos et pondera rerum
Non virtus sed casus agat, tristisque cupido;
Pectoribus sævi demens furor æstuet auri:
Omniaque hæc sine mente Jovis, sine numine summo!"

to the professors of the old faith, and punished by heavy penalties any officials who neglected to carry out his edicts against them. The arrival of Alaric completed the actual, as Honorius had completed the official obliteration of Paganism from the old capital of the Empire, destined henceforward to become the new capital of the Church. The scourge of the Gothic occupation swept Rome not only of its wealth and splendour, but, in a great measure, of its people. The remnant of the old families whom the sword had spared hurried forth in a precipitate flight, which they were never again to retrace. The Christians alone had the courage to revisit the scene of havoc, and establish themselves among those bloodstained and desolated streets. They alone had faith enough to believe in a possible resuscitation; in a new and greater destiny for the ancient Mistress of the World. Henceforward, Rome became entirely and unmistakably, as she had long practically been, a Christian city, and the central seat of a Christian power which was soon to dominate over the whole west of Europe.

A.D. 409.

So far as was possible in so limited a space, we have now passed in review some of the principal phenomena presented by Christianity in its contact with the old society and the imperial government. Nor can we, even after the lapse of so many centuries, feel indifferent to such a contemplation. "Heirs of all the ages," it is impossible for us to forget that we, too, share in the glories of that long struggle from ignominy up to empire; we cannot but sympathize with the men who, despite the overwhelming physical force, and the subtle influence of religious sentiment arrayed against them, brought out the obscure under-world life of the first century, victorious over the tumult of pride and pageantry which resounded above its head in the streets of Rome, and led up the persecuted faith from the catacombs step by step to the imperial palace on the Palatine, and the great national temple of Capitolian Jove. Nor again, speaking as

mere cold political observers, can we ever sufficiently admire that marvellous organization which bound, and firmly bound, into one society and one discipline, populations differing so widely in race, locality, and culture, and combined into no artificial unity the men who worshipped in the splendid shrines of Byzantium, Antioch, and Alexandria, with the rude and distant barbarians who saw the setting sun go down into the great ocean of the West. Yet we should fail in that truthfulness which is the soul of history, were we to assert that the Church of God came forth from the long conflict without scath or stain; with no dent upon her armour, no spot upon her escutcheon, in all the rigid purity and simplicity of her principles as they were first proclaimed by the shores of the Sea of Galilee and in the streets of Jerusalem. On such a subject, the prejudices, the interests, the passions of men, render anything like a dispassionate judgment impossible. Yet the difficulty must be accepted as the necessary condition of an attempt like the present. I shall merely record in general terms my own impressions, derived from such study as I have been able to bestow upon the age and upon the men. These, it is needless to say, affect no more authority than belongs to a very imperfect acquaintance with the subject. The Church, then, appears at this early period of her history, and so far as her relations with the old society are concerned, to have suffered somewhat, in three several ways, from immediate contact with the world around her. In the first place, the union of the Church authority with the imperial government to a certain degree secularized the character of the first, and removed it very far from the original ideal, such, for instance, as we see set forth in that striking monument of genius and piety, the "Civitas Dei" of St. Augustine. Secondly, while engaged in the difficult task of converting the rural and proletarian population of the Empire, she was compelled to accept a certain amount of heathen sentiment, and even some heathen

traditions, institutions, and practices. These, it is true, she modified by her own spirit, and disguised under her own forms. Still they existed, and, to a certain extent, continue to exist in some parts of her system. Thirdly, the fusion, so far as it went, of her doctrinal theology with the new Greco-oriental philosophy of Alexandria, which may be said to have originated in an attempt to rival and imitate the growing intellectual influence of Christianity, corrupted, for a time at any rate, the simplicity of the Gospel, and stifled its development by a parasitical growth of erroneous and fantastic interpretation.

The first topic is not one which we need pursue at length. It has occupied so prominent a place in the work of Gibbon, that the world is in no danger of forgetting the errors and internal convulsions of the Christian society and its governors, when they emerged from a state of oppression into one of authority and exalted place. Independent of his natural inclinations and his internal conviction of the truth of the religion which he had adopted, which I believe to have been sincere, Constantine was compelled, by the strongest motives of policy, to advance the social interests of the Christians, and to give to them an actual share in his imperial power. They were pre-eminently his own party; and while Paganism was still prevalent and powerful in the senatorial order, in the capital, among the rural populations, and in the army, without a strong political as well as moral support from this party, his throne was not secure even for an hour. But to give them political influence, he was compelled to admit their leaders to his councils, to act very frequently upon their suggestion, to throw himself into their interests, and allow them to participate in his administrative measures, as he himself participated in the measures by which they regulated the internal affairs of the religious society. Hence, the long controversies and troubles beginning with the Donatist schism in Africa, and continuing, despite of the

council of Nice, up to the very hour of the emperor's death, brought such men as the two Eusebius', Arius, and Athanasius into prominent relief before the eyes of the world, and secured for them a position in what we call "politics," which their aspiring genius knew well how to improve. The considerations which influenced Constantine in his treatment of the Church, no doubt affected his successors, though in a less degree. But by this time the leading bishops were firmly established, as the leading statesmen also of the Empire, and the history of Ambrose of Milan may show, without further inquiry, that they became the leading influence of their times. "The 'rapports' of the episcopate with the successors of Constantine," says a very able and trustworthy author, "were almost always friendly and peaceable. The Empire never dreamt of interfering with the liberty of the Church, and only demanded occasionally the right of confirming the election of bishops, and of sanctioning the convocation of councils: sometimes, also, that of presiding in them." * The main result of this policy was assuredly a service both to society and to the Church itself. It saved society from perishing, by implanting within it the seeds of a new and regenerated life, which it could have obtained from no other source. It aided and strengthened the Church, by furnishing it with a platform for its organization, and all the material appliances for extending and perfecting the machinery required for its development. It did more. It gave to Christian society the invaluable heritage of the Roman law, with all its strength, solidity, and authority; an authority based upon the most assured principles of equity and the practice of a thousand years. Few nations are without a deep debt of gratitude to this wonderful work of ancient wisdom, underlying, as it does, so much of their respective codes. But, in the mean-time, how was it with the Church itself?

"There are," says M. Capefigue, the Romanist Historian of

* Lerminier, Philosophie du Droit, liv. iii. ch. 3.

the Church,—and if we quote his work, it is not from any preference for his rhetorical, and often inaccurate language, but because no one can doubt his extremely ultramontane sympathies—"there are, in the history of all parties, two periods, two situations, entirely distinct,—that of opposition and that of accession to authority; and of the two, the latter probation is frequently the more severe. It frequently happens, that a party, whose capacity for attack and destruction is admirable, hesitates, trembles, and is lost when called to the direction of affairs. In this respect, Christianity itself seemed more suited for patience, suffering, and martyrdom, than for the duties of government." When the Church, under the early Christian emperors, was placed in that political situation which M. Capefigue has justly described as a more crucial test of character than injustice and oppression, did she, or did she not, suffer deterioration, from what the great mediæval poet of Italy has significantly called "the fatal dower of Constantine"? Doubtless much exaggeration has been employed in maintaining the affirmative, yet truth constrains us to confess, that the language of Dante is not without a certain melancholy justification.

The sunshine of prosperity and power called forth profusely, in the soil of the Church, those noxious weeds of pride, luxury, and wrath, which had been unable to germinate in the "winter of its discontent." It was ill when the martyr's crown was exchanged for the mitre, and when the hands which had been clasped in prayer alone, now closed upon the persecuting sword. The introduction of physical force into matters which had hitherto remained in the province of faith; the furious contests into which doctrinal controversy had developed; the spectacle of worldly, intriguing, and cringing courtiers in the high places of the Church; the general degeneracy of life among the lower clergy, and the numerous concessions to Pagan feeling, and even to Pagan practices, among the more ignorant converts, as well as the corrupting

taint of "vain philosophy," too evident in the leading teachers of the time—all these things must have led earnest men to doubt whether it was really well for Christianity that it had been raised from a dungeon to sit beside a throne.

"The change in the seat of empire," writes M. Capefigue, "forms a revolution of immense importance in the history of Christianity. It would have taken a long time at Rome for a man to purify himself from Paganism, and assume the robe of the neophyte; at Constantinople, a city entirely new, not a trace of Paganism remained. It was no longer the martyr's tomb which served to sustain the sacred mysteries, but vast altars of porphyry or marble. Gold glittered everywhere, and Constantine took as his model the biblical splendours of the Temple of Solomon. The bishops, priests, and deacons were no longer dressed in the simple garment of linen or coarse stuff which belonged to the epoch of persecution and martyrdom; they were clothed as the magistrates of Greece and the satraps of Syria or Persia. The bishop bore on his head the mitre adorned with precious stones; in his hand he grasped the pastoral staff, in the form of a sceptre; his finger was ornamented by an amethyst of large size; the dalmatic and chasuble were of silk. The priests and deacons adopted splendid ornaments, rich girdles, robes, and tunics. To the change, then, in the seat of empire may be ascribed the origin of ecclesiastical luxury and Catholic magnificence. The idea of the power of God revealed itself with such grandeur, that it was natural to crave after its manifestation by the pageantries of worship; the splendour of the altar is another homage to its Lord."* This gorgeous array of the external symbols which indicate temporal majesty and power, must have had for its accompaniment somewhat of the self-reliant pride which waits upon authority. Nor will it now

* Les quatre Premiers Siècles de l'Eglise Chrétienne, vol. ii. p. 186.

be difficult to understand what we meant by asserting that the new position of the Church exposed it to temptations from the secular and political spirit, which were not always resisted, and corrupted its primitive purity by a mixture of luxury and magnificence, which scarcely befitted a society whose kingdom was not of this world, whose real polity was in heaven, and whose rule of life had been to "look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

To these facts we must add another, which will be very differently regarded by persons of opposite opinion, but which, whether unavoidable or not, certainly contributed to introduce the secular element into church affairs, and to place them in a certain degree of subordination to the civil government. The civil governor assumed an amount of authority in ecclesiastical arrangements, even in the determination of doctrine, which seriously affected the character of church institutions, and even the personal conduct of churchmen. Perhaps the expression "assumed" is an incorrect one; for this authority was, in a great measure, forced upon the temporal ruler by the battles and disastrous controversies of the age. These could be appeased by councils only, and with the emperor rested the right to summon councils; and with him also rested the responsibility of presiding in them, for under no other presidency could they have been conducted, in difficult cases, with any rational hope of success. Independently of the actual influence conferred on the special occasion by this office of arbiter in theological debate, there was created also another general influence in the public mind, which continued to invest the emperor with those attributes which he had only accepted or assumed for a particular purpose. The world, wearied with religious controversy, and confused with the noisy strife of sectarian champions, accepted only too gladly the

practical solution of the metaphysical difficulties which an imperial order prescribed. This was not, of course, the case with the leaders of party,—those energetic or turbulent characters, who force themselves to the surface in the stream of historic narrative, and by the commotion which they excite divert notice from the strong under-current of popular opinion by which they are eventually borne along. But with the masses it was not so. A strong sentiment of the supremacy of the civil ruler, or, if the word be too strong, of his dominant influence, grew up in the Roman world which obeyed the sceptre of Constantine and his successors, and perpetuated itself, as we shall see, down to the era of the barbarian nationalities. This result was greatly assisted, if not mainly produced, by the relations of the reigning emperor with the Episcopate, and through it with the inferior clergy. Originally, the right of election to the office of bishop rested "cum clero et populo" (with the clergy themselves and with the people); but in process of time, by a turn of policy familiar in ancient, and not altogether unknown in modern days, the emperor claimed to wield his authority as representative and delegate of the people. The logical inference from this theory was that the emperor should succeed to those rights in ecclesiastical appointments which originally were vested in the persons whom he now represented. These rights were at first, it is most probable, only exercised, and that not systematically, in the case of the great patriarchal sees at Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome,—those splendid prizes with which the civil ruler was enabled to stimulate the affection or reward the fidelity of aspiring churchmen. Even this interference was not recognized at first as legal. Gibbon has asserted, and Hallam indorses the statement, that no fewer than eighteen thousand posts were filled by popular election; but, virtually, the emperor appointed the patriarch, the patriarch the metropolitan, the metropolitan the bishop, and the

bishop the subordinate clergy. And further still, what the emperor did at the seat of government, the imperial prefect imitated, on a smaller scale, in his province; so that, upon the whole, it cannot be denied that, practically speaking, ecclesiastical appointments were, from very early times, under political influence. Whether the practice was evil or beneficial for the Church, it soon acquired strength, and assumed a legalized form. We find the emperor, as we have said, almost of necessity constituting himself a judge in spiritual matters, or, at the least, appointing those who were to judge them. And we find society acquiescing in the position without reluctance, because, in an age when spiritual questions forced themselves, with all the power of novelty, upon the conscience, men were eager to accept from any source which seemed authoritative, that standard of faith and those fixed rules of practice, which the spiritual body by its dissensions *seemed* only to display for a moment before their eyes, for the purpose of changing or withdrawing them altogether. Very soon, then, the temporal ruler assumed the management of church legislation, and the right of enforcing its enactments by pains and penalties of his own; and with the management of church legislation he widely extended his own prerogative with respect to the appointment of church officers. We see him modifying at his pleasure the arrangements made for the localization of the Church, subdividing dioceses, translating bishops, and raising or depressing in importance, as suited the interests of temporal policy, the cities which were seats of episcopal government. Another advance was soon made by a claim to the right of investiture,—fruitful source of strife for future ages,—the right, that is to say, of placing the consecrated "pallium" on the persons of the bishops at the time of their election,—a significant action, involving the claim of temporal jurisdiction over themselves and their dioceses. Under plea of the tumultous scenes and the mischievous disorders

which accompanied popular elections,—a plea only too abundantly justified by the facts,—the emperor next claimed the right of nominating the candidate for the vacant see, which was, of course, equivalent to appointing him. *Congês d'élire* are a time-honoured invention: they wear the aspect of inconsistency: upon abstract principles, there is some difficulty in defending them; but then, as now, the Church and society accepted them as practical safeguards against evils worse than themselves.

That which we have called the second secular tendency of the Church, is intimately connected with the first. This was exhibited in a disposition, we will not say to imitate the observances of Paganism for purposes of policy, but, at any rate, to concede something to the old prejudices and habits, to accommodate to a Christian standard, practices with which the heathen would not willingly part, and to retain for the services of the Church, what had proved so attractive in the worship of the ancient divinities. "There is a tendency in divine things"—we are again influenced by the same reasons to use the language of M. Capefigue rather than our own—"to an admixture with humanity. No sooner had the Christian worship obtained the favour of imperial toleration, than it appropriated to itself several of the external forms of Paganism. Disdaining pomp upon principle, it was, nevertheless, well aware, that to triumph over the old cult in the imagination of the multitude, it must of necessity concede something to the senses and to art. Already, during its subterranean life in the catacombs, it had adorned its altars, reared upon the tombs of the martyrs, with figures or rude sculptures which represented the Cross, the mysterious symbols of the Faith, the countenance of the Saviour, that of St. Peter or St. Paul, or certain subjects selected from the Old or New Testament. The Christians next adorned the altars themselves with natural flowers; they lighted them up with wax candles

night and day, either because the custom takes its origin from the darkness of the catacombs, or because the lighted candles present a symbolic image of the Eternal Light, lighting the living and the dead. Christianity purified for herself the pomps and processions so frequent in the mysteries, especially those of Isis, in which were carried vases and consecrated baskets, as one still sees them in the Egyptian monuments. If, then, the new Faith kept herself austere and divine in principle, she popularized herself in form, and penetrated among the masses by the use of that external pageantry of which she had already made experiment in the violent persecution of the unrelenting Diocletian."* These judicious and candid remarks might be confirmed by illustrations, which the eloquent historian has perhaps not unwillingly omitted. It seems clear that the Church with difficulty possessed herself of the affections, and subdued the imagination of a populace accustomed to the sensuous beauty of Greek art, and to the splendour of Roman ritual. She felt that her own poor and simple externals contrasted in the common mind most unfavourably with the magnificence of the Pagan ceremonials, and the pomp, processions, festivity and lavish feasting which accompanied them. And she also felt, that the doctrines which she had to proclaim, were little likely to find entrance into intellects entirely absorbed in a superstition which was fostered by the sight of all familiar things, and had become ingrained into the very nature of the masses. The wrench which was to tear them away from all the ancient objects of their affection, and all the constituents, so to speak, of their moral and intellectual being, was so violent, as to threaten fatal consequences. Expedients, therefore, of all kinds were sought, by the able rulers of the newly-victorious Church, to lessen this evil, and modify its most mischievous results. And, if in their new

* Les quatre Premiers Siècles de l'Eglise Chrétienne, vol. ii. p. 195.

position, as associates of the civic power, they descended somewhat from the exalted spiritualism of their original principles and primitive constitution; if they adopted what may be called a temporizing policy, and submitted to compromise in what they considered matters of practice rather than matters of faith, they undoubtedly deserve condemnation from impartial justice. But what generation, what society among their successors in Church administration, is entitled to sit in judgment upon their errors, and cast the first stone of indignant reprobation at their heads? We shall not pause to argue the question; we have now only to deal with facts. Let us again seek the testimony of a distinguished member of another Church, where the language of our own might be regarded with suspicion. "At Rome," says M. Ph. Châsles, "the old superstition was now attached only to empty forms, to the indestructible usages of language, to effete traditions, which still feebly dragged on a languishing existence, and which men did not only make no attempt to destroy, but most carefully assimilated to Christianity. The Temple became a Church: the Pagan in adoring Christ thought he was adoring Apollo. The worship of the Virgin Mary, which now began to spread, was one of the principal expedients employed by the conquering religion, and one of the most successful. In the eyes of all, this new idol was worthy of respect. A woman bore an infant in her arms: mother at once and maid, a symbol touching and full of fascination. Before the Virgin Mary, the whole of idolatrous Sicily laid aside its pagan prejudices;—we still find in Greece and Russia the Panagia more venerated than the Trinity itself. In Spain and in Italy, the Virgin without stain is an object of profound and almost pagan veneration. The Apollo on Mount Casino was not overthrown from his altar until it was done by St. Benedict, in the year 529 A.D. The worship of Diana was absolutely maintained in the neighbourhood of Treves

even up to the eighteenth century." The same writer goes on to speak in similar terms of the northern gods worshipped by the barbarous races who overthrew the Empire. The effect produced by their mythology more properly belongs to the second part of this inquiry. But we may, in passing, assent to the observation that the gods of the Scandinavian Pantheon were absorbed and lost in the confusion of practice arising from the contact of Christianity with the old-world Paganism. Thor was confounded with Jupiter, Woden with Mercury; and in all the primitive literature of Germany there is a singular mixture of the old Teutonic heathenism with the gentler inspirations of the new faith. But to return for a moment to the previous question; there can be no doubt but that much of the splendid ceremonial by which the Church of Rome knows so well how to fascinate the impressionable races of southern Europe, owes its origin to an amalgamation, or an imitation of the most familiar forms of the Pagan Ritual. The marvellous masterpieces of ancient sculpture and painting; the purple robes, gleaming with gold and jewels, worn by the officiating priests; the long triumphal trains, winding their way through festive streets to the temples of the immortal Gods; the varied pageantry which age after age had charmed the more refined votaries of a sensuous faith, and subdued the superstitious imaginations of the vulgar, naturally suggested, or, as some say, necessitated, the pomp of Catholic worship and the beautiful creations of Christian Art; while these, by a not unnatural reaction, produced the Iconoclasm of the Isaurian Leo, of German Anabaptists, and English Puritans. Yet undoubtedly the feeling in the mind of those before whom the question was first practically brought must have been one which it is very easy to understand. Shall Heathenism offer beauty to the eye, and enchantment to the senses, derived from the material world, and shall not Christianity, which is the worship of Him who is the Creator and the

Lord of Nature, be enabled under due modification to do the same? The principle is perhaps indisputable, yet its actual application is accompanied by so many risks and difficulties that it has seldom entirely succeeded. It cannot be said to have done so in the early Church. Among the many curious details of observances adopted from Heathenism, many must strike us, who have the means of applying the test of experience, as involving a perilous approximation to idolatry and superstition. The religious processions, to which we have already referred, were a reproduction of the pageants witnessed every day in the streets of the capital, when some native god, or newly-imported divinity from the East, was to receive especial honours, and the populace a pleasing distraction. The celebration of the Christian festivals was frequently determined by the period at which some popular pagan festival had been held, in order to reconcile the imperfectly-established converts to the loss of their cherished amusements; thus the great Feast of Christmas was undoubtedly made coincident with the Saturnalia, that the Libertas Decembri, as Horace calls it, "the license of the season," might still be preserved for the neophyte, proletarian, or slave. The decorations of the priesthood and the churches were in many instances suggested by those of the Heathen Temple. The Basilica, or earliest building in which the worship of God was conducted, was in the first instance a Roman court of law, and subsequently an imitation of it; the mitre is supposed to have been a heathen ornament; the surplice is from Egypt; the altar derived its name and shape from a pagan antetype; its lighted candles, even if they originated in the darkness of the Catacombs, had a similar precedent, for individuals were in the habit of offering lamps to their gods, just as the taper burning in honour of Saints or the Virgin may be perpetually seen in Italy, France, and Spain; holy water was compounded from a heathen receipt, in certain proportions of the pure element

and salt, and the means employed in sprinkling it were the same; in ancient bas-relievos, is seen the boy swinging the box of incense before the officiating priest of Jupiter, just as it is swung in the perfumed atmosphere which surrounds the high altar of the Madeleine or St. Peter's; if a nimbus or circle of golden light encircles the head of Christian saints, the colossal statue of Nero wore a crown of rays imitating the glory of the sun, and this was itself in imitation of an ornament very commonly affixed to the ancient divinities; if the faithful attest their humility and allegiance by saluting the toe of St. Peter's successor, a similar act of obeisance was performed long before, to a very different potentate, in the same place; for Caligula accepted the ceremony from the servility of his courtiers. Classical literature is full of allusions to the practice of offering up votive tablets, or imitations of members of the body, executed in wax, as a thanksgiving for an escape from peril or disease, and the prejudices of Protestants are continually shocked upon the Continent by witnessing these strange accessories upon the walls of Roman Catholic cathedrals. The right of sanctuary, claimed by the Christian for the interior of the church, had been already extended to the fugitive criminal by Pallas and Apollo; the shrines which, by the side of the roads, and at the crossways in Continental Europe, display to the wonder of the stranger, and the adoration of the peasant, a tawdrily attired Saint or Virgin, exactly resemble the viales, semitales, and compitales of the heathen. The great variety of religious societies and orders which sprang up in the Church has been ascribed to the precedent afforded by the colleges of Augurs, Pontifices, Salii, Fratres Avernales, and others, with which the old mythological system had rendered her familiar. Monasticism was doubtless in many respects a peculiar institution of Egyptian origin and semi-oriental character; yet it had many precedents among the worshippers of heathen divinities,

as is clear from what is recorded concerning the Salii, or priests of Dodonean Jupiter; the Galli, or priests of Cybele, and others. Paganism had its flagellants and its wandering friars, as well as the Papacy, nor was the moral difference between the practitioners of any very great importance. One example is at any rate conspicuous and familiar. The beautiful little shrine which crowns the height of Tivoli, and looks down upon the waters of the Arno, as they dash from that picturesque cliff into the plain below, was destined to have its counterpart in many a lovely and unlovely spot in Christianized Europe, where the life-long sacrifice of those who fed the eternal fire was to be imitated by the daughters of a more enlightened faith. This list might largely be increased, were such our object. But we only profess to indicate, generally, sources of information and reflection for those who have the opportunity of dealing thoughtfully with the question. Our narrow limits compel us to turn, in conclusion, to the third great influence which we believe to have operated unfavourably on the early Church.

The apostolic warning against vain Philosophy, her seductions and perversions of the faith, was effectual enough while Christianity dwelt in places which Philosophy did not care to enter, and while it was confined to persons whom Philosophy regarded as a profane and vulgar herd, inaccessible to the illumination of reason, and incapable of apprehending speculative truth. But when men of higher intellectual culture had accepted the new doctrine, the relations of the two parties underwent a change. It was no longer possible to pour contempt upon its professors, as Galileans, atheists, sorcerers, impostors, impure, child-murderers, the very dregs and offscouring of humanity. The witness of men's senses proved to them, that a great and living power had come into being amongst them; a power which, according to the beautiful illustration of Hume, had found the fulcrum which Archimedes wanted, and which was enabled to stir this

world to its very base, because the local origin of its motive force was situated in another. On the one hand, therefore, the strength and greatness of the new faith; its immense capacities for endurance, activity and expansion; the patent fact of its success, could no longer be disputed or ignored; while on the other, the old faith was now beginning to be tried in the furnace of affliction, and was found unavailing to furnish consolation or support, amid the immense evils and frightful suffering which had come upon the world. Philosophy therefore was compelled to condescension; it was compelled to notice the great moral phenomenon which had grown up beside it in the Empire; nay, it might naturally hope to penetrate the secret of its wonderful social strength, and avail itself of the knowledge thus acquired. But on the other part, it is certain that the more cultivated Christian minds felt keenly the reproach of entire estrangement from the whole commonwealth of letters. They could not bear to be described as ignorant of that old Hellenic world of thought and that wealth of creative genius which had civilized mankind. Conscious of the beauty, the sublimity, and the purity of a faith which surpassed, in these qualities, the highest flights of heathen intellect, they were naturally impatient of the language which described it as a blind and stupid superstition. It was easy to prove the negative, and perhaps the leading minds of the Christian Church were precipitate in their attempt to do so. At any rate these causes brought about a *rapprochement* between the two parties which was very singular in its character, and very singular in its effects. In those interesting and ably written lectures of Mr. Kingsley, "Alexandria and her Schools," this double movement is very clearly and graphically described. He has also discerned, with his usual felicity, the substance of eternal truth which, despite of its extravagances, was underlying the philosophy that became the rival of Christianity, and gave to it whatever force and vitality it

possessed. The whole question is one of the highest interest and importance, nor has it, in this country at any rates, received that popular attention which it merits, and, indeed, if we are to have an historical Christian literature, imperatively demands. The little work of Mr. Kingsley will give the student an opportunity of correcting some of the misconceptions and vague ideas which he has probably derived from Gibbon. The latter does not seem to have understood that two schools, one of pagan and one of Christian origin, simultaneously subsisted in the Egyptian capital, and that although a common tendency to the spirit Greek Platonism gave a common aspect to them both, they were very different in their genesis, in their fundamental principle, and in the practical result of their attempt to develop it. This Mr. Kingsley has very satisfactorily shown, yet, perhaps, he says too much, when he declares that "during the whole period of their existence, they were in internecine struggle with each other;" and he certainly undervalues, or understates, the influence of the East upon what they had in common. The conquests of Alexander had brought into contact the doctrines of Greece, Persia, India, and Egypt. Greek philosophy had become, since the death of Aristotle, gradually more powerless and effete, and the Megaric, Pyrrhonist, and Cyrenaic schools had done little to bring it down from the region of words, into that of practical life, and bestow upon it a working faith. The Greek mind, therefore, threw itself with a degree of eagerness into the mystic teaching of the East, from a desire to refresh its energies with the traditionary knowledge derived from the ancient home and birthplace of wisdom; nor, again, were the Eastern sages slow in their turn to borrow the clearly-elaborated reasoning, and logical forms, devised by the genius of the Greeks. But Alexandria, from the circumstances of its situation, was almost of necessity the spot where all these cults, philosophies, and faiths flowed together and combined;

where professors of Athens, Syrians, Jews, Brahmins from the banks of the Ganges, Chaldee astrologers, and Christians of Rome, encountered one another in a strange and varied intellectual life. It was an epoch of eclecticism, for eclecticism was now the only thing which was left for philosophy to try; and in this great eclectic effort, Christianity became, to a certain extent, involved. Of the immense number and variety of its sources, some idea may be formed from the careful classification of M. Matter, who has devoted three interesting volumes to the subject. He indicates an original source purely Greek, another Indo-Greek, another Indo-Egyptian, another Persian and Chaldee, another Buddhist and Chinese, another purely Jewish, another Syro-Phœnician, another, and most important one, he finds in the Christian doctrine of the contemporary Church.

The point of contact where these systems met,—the one principle which gave them anything of a common nature or name,—was the *Gnosis*, or "divine illumination," a transcendental knowledge, or rather "process of knowing" the truth, shared among the fortunate participants in the faculty, and denied to the multitude. "The belief," says M. Matter, that the Divinity had manifested himself in the religious institutions of all nations, authorized the borrowing from all quarters; but the persuasion that this manifestation had not been anywhere complete, and had not revealed the supreme God, gave, with respect to all systems, an equal liberty of dealing with them. That which is always and everywhere at the base of Gnosticism, is the great apparition of a 'Revealer' of this supreme God, *i.e.* the fundamental dogma of Christianity. But this dogma received among the Gnostics all the modifications which were suggested to them by the other systems from which they drew their ideas; and so variously did they do this, that it was sometimes the Judaism of Alexandria or Jerusalem, sometimes the Oriental theogonies, sometimes those of Egypt or Greece, which were mingled with a

Christian basis." Gnosticism, therefore, in its most transcendentally eclectic form, affected to place itself above all those systems, and, speaking from its own sublime elevation, it explained to the Jew, that his God was but a subaltern divinity, revealing himself to the favoured nation in an imperfect religious law; to the old pagan Polytheists, that their mythology was a very rude and inchoate revelation of the Divine; to the philosophers, that their philosophy was devoid of the mystic illuminism which alone lights the souls of men to the truth. To the Christian, its language was, "You do not comprehend the true force, the inner import of your own doctrine; for your teachers, blinded by ignorance or the narrow national prejudices of Judaism, have been unable to comprehend it themselves, or disclose it to their disciples." Such was, so to speak, the high ideal and typical form of Gnosticism; but, as we have implied, its theory and nature varied as it was approached from different points of view, and with different antecedents. The common notion entertained about Gnosticism is, that it was more or less a deflection from the orthodox Christian belief; a debased type of Christianity, to be classified among the primitive heresies. Nothing can be more inexact. It was an immense collection of philosophical systems gathered from all parts of the world, and containing, no doubt, Christian elements among the rest; but these were overlain and smothered by the incumbent mass of mysticism and elaborate speculation which its all-embracing eclecticism comprised.

To separate these elements, distinguish, and classify them, would require a separate work,—a work which the labours of Mosheim have by no means rendered unnecessary. Our own notice of the subject must be brief indeed. With Oriental speculation, its schools and disciples, we have here nothing to do. But it may not be foreign to our purpose if we make a few remarks as to the effect of the Gnostic spirit and teaching upon the established religion and

philosophy of the Roman empire at the time when Christianity became a recognized fact, and also as to its effect upon Christianity itself.

The real religion of old Rome, in its mythological form, had perished beneath a series of assaults more or less avowedly hostile. First came its syncretism with the Greek systems; a syncretism fatal to the Italian Divinities, so different in their rural simplicity from the more brilliant and artificial creations of the Hellenic mind. The next inroad was that of the Greek philosophical schools, which had naturally the effect of a strong rationalizing movement; and this was brought to a disastrous climax by the widely-welcomed introduction of the Epicurean physical system, and its practical action upon social life, so deeply lamented by Cicero. There was, however, yet "a lower deep," already noticed in these pages; a polluted tide of Oriental superstitions poured into Rome, and thoroughly infected her moral being. The result, among rational and inquiring men, was an era of scepticism, like that which preceded the French revolution, and of which we have a representative in the scoffing Lucian, who has been not inaptly called the Voltaire of the Decadence. Between the two abysses of Atheism on the one hand, and an utterly debased and debasing Superstition on the other, Gnosticism for the time being offered to the ancient Heathenism a ground upon which it might repose. In the effort to maintain itself under this altered aspect, it abandoned much of its original character, and accepted much that was alien from it. Heathenism, I say, casting aside the slough of the old sensualism, appeared before the world in a new and glittering guise, as philosophic, super-sensuous, and mystical. It discarded the more gross attributes of its earlier form, and elaborated a species of refined Pantheism, replete with mystic meanings, and dependent upon the allegorical interpretation of its primitive traditions. The vague shadow of a Supreme Being replaced the Zeus of

Homer, father of Gods and men, and Capitolian Jove, the tutelary guardian of the children and fortunes of Rome. A crowd of subordinate powers arose instead of the legendary gods of Greece and Italy. Allegory supplied the place of the accepted traditionary accounts of their birth, nature, and functions. Demonology superseded Polytheism, though it must be admitted without any very material advantage to the recipients; and a meaning hitherto latent was detected in the ancient faith and its religious rites. Upon the discovery was built up an ingenious symbolism, which employed, if it did not satisfy the intellect, and made shift to exhibit the outward form, though it could not engender the working qualities of a Faith. This it did not succeed in doing, and, from the nature of the case, did not possess the means to do. But on this failure and its causes we shall have a few words to say in conclusion.

In the mean time, what was the form and method under which Christianity approached the same point? The more cultivated class of Christian minds, impatient, as has been said, of their alienation from the whole world of secular knowledge, and haunted by the conviction that goodness, truth, and beauty, wherever found, must have proceeded from the God of the Gospel, had by this time come to regard the intellectual product of former ages in a very different way from their unlettered predecessors. The writings of the Christian Apologists, in what may be termed the second stage of the Christian society, are full of expressions which it is easy for a disingenuous mind like that of Gibbon to abuse. The often-repeated expression of one of them may be taken as representing the spirit of all. "What is Plato," asks Numenius, "but Moses talking Greek?" "The source of all wisdom, they said, has ever been the same. That which has hitherto existed in the heathen world was either a pale reflex or faint anticipation of the real intellectual illumination, the γνῶσις, or transcen-

dental knowledge which we have at last received. Christianity contains all the truth which philosophy ever contained, and very much more beside. Wise men of old, of every land and time, spoke by the spirit of God, but it was often with an uncertain and stammering utterance. The intellectual discoveries, the large conceptions of which you philosophers boast, were partial revelations of the truth which we are now commissioned to teach in its full revelation. Philosophy was a very imperfect Christianity; Christianity is philosophy in a perfect form, purified by the interference of God's own personal agency, and completed by an entire unveiling of His nature, of His relation to man, and of man's relation to Him."

No system, such is the prodigious force of man's mental activity, be it philosophical or religious, can entirely stifle development from within, or entirely resist influences from without. In the life of a religion, as in the life of a nation, stagnation is death. Not only does it modify those portions which may be regarded as strictly its own creation, but even those truths revealed and received from a higher source, are ever exhibiting new aspects of themselves, entering into new combinations, and disclosing their adaptation to new phases of intellectual and social life. It would, therefore, be idle to believe that the Christianity of the second century could, or ought to have been so crystallized into a fixed form, that the immense and varied movement of the human mind around it should have been entirely without modifying influence upon its character. But the question as to the influence of Gnosticism upon orthodox Christianity, must be reduced to more precision before it can be answered. Is it meant that Christianity borrowed any purely Gnostic doctrine, belonging to Gnosticism, and not to herself, and, after the appropriation, adopted it into her system? Or is it meant that Christianity and Gnosticism severally derived anything from a third source, which

was originally independent of both? Or, finally, are these questions to be generally answered in the negative? and was it a universal tendency towards mysticism and theological speculation, born of the time, and affecting all forms of its intellectual life, which acted upon both one and the other, though in a manner conformable with their separate natures and objects? Upon a careful examination, the last supposition will appear to be the most correct. The Roman or Latin school rejected Gnosticism altogether. The schools of Africa were divided: those under Roman influence followed the Roman practice; those more nearly connected with Greece yielded in some degree to a tendency so eminently Greek at all times, but now more than ever developed by the contact of Oriental mysticism. Neither, as some may suppose, was the language of Scripture such as clearly to forbid and render impossible any infusion of the Gnostic spirit. St. Paul undoubtedly condemns, in distinct terms, the γνῶσις, "falsely so called," yet sufficient commendation of the real γνῶσις may be found in the apostolic epistles to encourage inclinations already directed towards it. Nor was the Christianized adaptation of the Gnostic technology in the Gospel of St. John without a similar influence. Clement of Alexandria speaks more than once of the γνῶσις in a manner open to misinterpretation by those whose interest it is to misinterpret. He says there is a γνῶσις, though none but Christians possess it. He recommends the γνωστικὸς βίος, or life of transcendental "*knowing*," as a fit model of the Christian life. But such expressions do not make him a Gnostic, any more than the semi-Platonist expressions in the introduction to the Gospel of St. John make the Evangelist a Neo-Platonist. Eusebius again, no less than Clement, recognizes γνῶσις as the gift and characteristic of the Christian life. Indeed, he represents it almost as equivalent to Divine revelation, and declares that it was communicated to men by Jesus Christ. But, perhaps, the most signal instance of the use

of Gnostic language is to be found in one whose name, a few years ago, would have been strange to most English ears. But the story of the maiden teacher and philosopher of Alexandria, so gracefully told by Mr. Kingsley, has rendered Synesius familiar to an English public as Hypatia's friend. In his hymns he adopts language so thoroughly Gnostic, that even M. Matter, who most strongly maintains the purity of the Christian dogma, notwithstanding its occasionally equivocal expression, is constrained to admit that the reader, unacquainted with the name of the author, would probably imagine the whole to be the work of a Valentinian heretic. Yet, he goes on to observe, that no Gnostic would ever have accepted the words of Synesius in the sense which he himself attached to them; no Gnostic would ever have accepted the worthy bishop of Ptolemais as a co-disciple and brother of the philosophic guild. He was a Platonist, and a friend of the great Platonist teacher of the age, with whom he reciprocated good offices and ideas. A tinge of Platonism, therefore, pervades his style and his notions upon metaphysical subjects; but he cannot, for this reason, be accused of abandoning the fundamentals of the faith, any more than St. John can be accused of abandoning them when he dwells on "the Life," "the Light," and "the Fulness,' names of Gnostic emanations, and adopts the special phraseology of the Gnostic schools. The same pleas can hardly be used in favour of Arnobius; for though zealously Christian according to his knowledge, he appears much more thoroughly imbued with the results of a heathen education. But, be this as it may, the moment we pass beyond what Catholic tradition recognizes as orthodox doctrine, the more mischievous influences of Gnosticism become fully apparent. It is only necessary to cast our eyes over the long list of early heresies, to perceive how important a part was played in their construction by the Protean spirit of the Gnostic philosophy. Ebionites, Nazarites, Docetæ, and others of Judaizing tendencies, were

members of that particular school which had grown up among the scattered sons of Israel; or, if not so directly imbued with Gnostic principles as the Jewish and Samaritan schools, properly so called, were largely affected by them. Other heretics, again, though free from this particular taint, had caught another, perhaps as strong and malignant, from the Oriental and Hellenic Polytheism which subsisted beside them. Those very remarkable mystics, the Agapetæ, exhibit features which strongly recall the peculiarities of mediæval pietism; and there can be no doubt that the speculative spirit of the γνῶσις deeply influenced, if it did not originate, the teaching of Manichæans, Arians, and Sabellians. The history of the process is the old, perhaps we might say the universal, one. Dissidents from the orthodox doctrine, whose grounds of difference were at first most trifling, having reference, perhaps, merely to some traditional observance, became irritated, obstinate, and pugnacious by opposition, and, finding the necessity for some external support, soon learnt to look for it in the Gnostic schools. Yet this opposition was not an unmixed evil. To the encroachment of these intellectual errors we owe some among the most valuable works of the primitive fathers. Irenæus, Theodoret, and Epiphanius appear before us principally as controversialists and combatants in this warfare. From this originated the famous discourse of Origen against Celsus. To the same cause we owe much of the Alexandrian Clement, and many of the treatises of Tertullian. What, then, is our general conclusion? It cannot be better stated than in the words of the painstaking historian of the whole intellectual movement: "If we are to inquire what has been the influence of the Gnostics and their teaching upon the composition, the studies, and the scientific development of the orthodox doctrine, we must recognize an intellectual action of no little magnitude. It is certain that theories projected into the bosom of Chris-

tianity by the Gnostics drew the doctors of the Church into a series of special studies,—studies of philosophy and theogony, of philology and archæology, Greek or Oriental, whose influence over the Christian schools of Syria and Egypt, if not of Rome and Carthage, is beyond calculation." * We may add that this influence has been more long-lived than is commonly imagined. Gnosticism, under one form or another, lasted until the fourteenth century; indeed, so subtle and delusive are its shapes, that it may be living still. Paulicianism, which had its origin in Armenia, was, no doubt, a revival of Gnostic ideas and principles; and the Paulician doctrines were themselves revived in the West by the "Cathari," or Puritans, and the Bogomites in the East, concerning whose "suppression" by her father, the Greek emperor, Anna Comnena expatiates in her tedious pages. This was in the twelfth century. The religious doctrines which provoked the bloody Albigensian crusade must be admitted, even by fair Protestant criticism, to have been connected intimately with these antecedents. And, lastly, the cruel confiscations, tortures, and judicial murders which exterminated the gallant order of the Templars, were called forth by the strange heretical semi-Gnostic notions which those warrior priests had imbibed in their contact with Islamism, and from their residence in the East.

We must now close our brief and imperfect reference to this most interesting era in the history of the Church and the movement of the human mind. But, in conclusion, let us endeavour to catch a brief glimpse of its inner nature, and the causes of its contradictory development. All Gnosticism, pure and impure, Greek, Oriental, and Christian, had one great root-idea, from which countless ramifications sprang. This idea was that of a Divine something in man, and a Divine something in the Universe answering to it, and communicating with it by utterances of various sorts. This

* Matter, Histoire Critique du Gnosticism.

Divine something received, even before the Christian use of the term, the appellation of Λόγος, the eternal Word, or Reason; the source of all human reason, and the origin of all human knowledge. "The belief in this Λόγος was one which neither Plutarch nor Marcus, neither Numenius nor Ammonius, so far as we can see, learnt from the Christians; it was the common ground which they held, the common battle-field which they disputed with them."* But how came this "common field" to be converted into a "common battle-field?" for herein is the gist of the whole matter. It was from the different aspects under which either party regarded the Λόγος, and their own relation to it. With the heathen philosopher it was an impersonal, intellectual illumination, by participation in which the individual soul acquired access to the great Soul of the Universe, and assimilation to it. The philosopher, according to Plotinus, sought to bring the God within him into harmony with the God who is in the Universe; and this, Mr. Kingsley says, expresses in one sentence the whole object of Neo-Platonism. With the Christian, the Λόγος was a Person, with personal functions and sympathies. The qualities of truth, wisdom, goodness, order, and law, they argued, imply a Person in whom they are to inhere; and as the search after these is the object of all philosophy, the object of philosophy is a Person. And, in contradiction to Plotinus, they felt that his description of the process by which the Divine and the human are amalgamated is a direct inversion of the true process. They knew that the origin of the process must be with God, and not with their own soul; that He strove to bring the souls of men into harmony with Himself, and the personal Λόγος, or Word, was the means and channel whereby this was effected. From this radical difference flowed others of equal importance. For, according to the heathen view, the γνῶσις was purely intellectual; it dealt with notions only, and abstractions, and, as such, was

* Schools of Alexandria, p. 97.

practically barren of results. But with the Christian, the γνῶσις flowing from a Divine Person, and being interwoven with personal relations and responsibilities, assumed a moral character, and wrought upon actual life, and human will, and the common duties of men. Hence followed another wide divergence between the two when they came to deal with the inevitable and all-important question, Who, then, are or can be participants in this divine knowledge? Is it universal, or is it partial? Is it the special privilege of a few, or is it the inheritance of all the race? "No," after many internal struggles, Philosophy was constrained to reply; "no; this illumination is not, and cannot be, the inheritance of the herd; with *their* brute natures and gross conceptions, it cannot co-exist; they must be given up; they are doomed to eternal exclusion from the light." But the Christian was compelled to answer, "Yes." He equally believed, on the authority of his inspired Teacher, in the illumination of an in-dwelling Λόγος, or Light; but, on the same authority, he was constrained to admit that it lighted "every man that cometh (or "on his coming") into the world." He knew, from the declaration of the great apostle of the Gentiles, that this Λόγος was "in him, if he were not reprobate," and had lost it: he knew that he, individually, was the actual "temple, or dwelling-place," of this Divine Being, if his own corruptions had not polluted the temple and expelled the Divinity; but he also knew that the Divine Being was the real ground of the constitution of the whole universe, including all humanity; and that His special action upon humanity was expressed in dying for all men, and breaking down all the false distinctions which men had created between barbarian, Scythian, bond, and free,—distinctions which made up the very life of the heathen, but were impossible in the Christian Gnosis.

It was impossible, therefore, for the Christian Church, if she understood and maintained the ground of her own

being, and comprehended the source of her own illumination, to coalesce with any among the many Protean forms of philosophic illumination which had their centre, if not their birthplace, at Alexandria. They dealt with an impalpable, and to the multitude unintelligible because undefinable, illumination, derived from an impersonal source: she rested entirely upon a Person, and drew all her life and light and strength from the in-dwelling of this Person in herself. Their design was to form a favoured and initiated few into an exclusive School: her function was to embrace all men under a Kingdom acknowledging allegiance to a living Ruler. Their aim was to bring about an absorption of all human feelings and affections into a state of intellectual exaltation, the product of their special illuminism: it was her duty to encourage and maintain all human feelings and affections, by bringing them into right relations with their Author, as members of the body are to be brought into fitting connection with their Head. Finally, it was their professed object to secure the desired state of super-sensuous and spiritual elevation, by utterly ignoring or neglecting our lower nature,—a process which might most easily result in its entire corruption; but it was the privilege of the Christian Church, by teaching this very doctrine of the Head, the Body, and its Members, to take up the lower nature into the higher, and to dignify, purify, and sanctify it, by establishing a real communion between the two.

If, then, the Christian Church and the Alexandrian Gnosticism had their point of contact in the doctrine of a Divine illumination, it is plain, that when they proceeded to the practical application of the truth they held in common, the divergence between them, if they held to their own principles, was inexpressibly wide. The fact that the one evaporated and passed away, while the other, through unnumbered perils and difficulties, and, what is worse, through very many corruptions, and abandonments of its hold upon its own great

central truth, stood fast against "the gates of Hell," and still remains a great, visible, energizing social power in human society, must form an inexplicable problem to those who think and talk of "Christianity" and "Neo-Platonism" as two great rival systems, or two parts of a rival system, born into the world about the same time, and fighting with the same intellectual weapons for empire over the minds of men. To those who do not think and speak of "Christianity," but of the "Kingdom of God," who will not consent to regard "the Church" as a system of any kind, but as a corporate body, ruled by a living Ruler, and united to a living Head, the problem presents no difficulty of any kind; indeed, it ceases to be a problem at all, and presents itself to their minds as the natural and unavoidable consequence of the facts. Theories perish, Societies endure. It is vain to expect that the dry bones of systems and speculations, notions, tenets, and beliefs, shall live. Life is the attribute of personality,—without a Person, or corporate connection with a Person, it cannot be. In the mysterious fact that it is bound up indissolubly with a living Person, consists the vitality of the Christian Church.

LECTURE XIII.

THE CHURCH IN RELATION TO THE NEW SOCIETY.

"Vivitur omnigenis in partibus haud secus ac si
Cives congenitos includat mœnibus unis
Urbs patria, atque omnes Lare conciliemur avito;
. . . . . nam sanguine mixto
Texitur alternis ex gentibus una propago."
PRUDENTIUS *contra Symmachum*, ii. 585.

"I do not think that I say more than the truth in affirming that, at the end of the fourth and the commencement of the fifth centuries, it was the Christian Church that saved Christianity; it was the Church, with its institutions, its magistrates, and its power, that vigorously resisted the internal dissolution of the Empire and barbarism; that conquered the barbarians, and became the bond, the medium, and the principle of civilization between the Roman and barbarian worlds."—GUIZOT, *History of Civilization in Europe*, Lect. ii.

SYNOPSIS.—The position of the Church according to Guizot's view: it is too purely *doctrinaire*, and does not account for the facts.—The questions involved in the subject.—The first cause of the influence of the Church on the new Society was the fact that it was based upon the organization of the Empire, and that it took the place of the Empire in the eyes of the invaders.—The personal influence of its great bishops; of the Church Councils; of the Monastic Orders, and more especially the Benedictine.—The Benedictines revive agriculture and urban industry; they elevate labour in dignity; perhaps originate free labour; are the preservers of literature.—Independent effect of the action of the Church in proclaiming the principle of "equality:" its result on the slave and serf class.—Education in the hands of the Church; proved by the regulations of Charlemagne.—The great missionary action and influence of the Church.—All these admirable results had, however, some drawbacks:—First, the connection of the Church with the barbarian rulers necessitated its connivance at much violence and crime, and gave a secular character to its rulers; secondly, the same consequence flowed from the wealth and splendour which the Church

acquired.—This was entirely vested in the rulers, who exercised their power with great cruelty to their subordinates.—The increased learning and refinement of the Monastic Orders estranged them from the lower classes, and impaired their usefulness.—Two qualifications of the above statements are needful:—(1.) Some amount of secular power and secular action necessary to the very existence of the Church; (2.) The great mass of its good men not prominent in history.—Church life in the fifth century illustrated from Sidonius Apollinaris.

Contest of the Catholic Church with Arianism; in Gaul; in Spain; in Africa; in Italy.—Contest with Paganism in Britain.—The last question: Why did Church government determine in the Papacy?—The concurring causes pointed out.—General reflections.

THE relation of the Christian Church to the new order of things resulting from the slow fusion of the imperial and barbarian societies, was so completely a consequence of its existing position in respect of the first, and the conditions under which the latter was evolved, that we should violate not only the dramatic unity of composition, but the plain truth of history, if we regarded the several subjects as independent and distinct. The present lecture is, therefore, of course, closely connected with those which precede it, and may involve some repetition of what has been already said. While, however, I hope to avoid all mere repetition, I shall find it a far more difficult task to confine attention to one or two salient points and important matters, in a field of inquiry so large and so diversified. The confused and stormy condition of human life, contemporaneous with the fall of the Empire, has been well described by M. Guizot, and most of us are more or less familiar with his speculations. He sees in this moral chaos all the elements out of which was subsequently compounded, by a process of progressive development, the very complex work of modern civilization. "We have found, at this time," he says, "three wholly different societies: the municipal society, the last remains of the Roman empire, the Christian society, and the Barbaric society. We find these societies very variously organized, founded upon totally different prin-

ciples, inspiring men with wholly different sentiments: we find the craving after the most absolute independence side by side with the most complete submission; military patronage side by side with ecclesiastical dominion; the spiritual and temporal powers, everywhere present, the canons of the Church, the learned legislation of the Romans; the almost unwritten customs of the barbarians, everywhere the mixture, or rather the co-existence, of the most diverse races, languages, social institutions, manners, ideas, and impressions." The part played by the Christian Church in reducing to harmony this immense discord, has been clearly seen and candidly stated by the same great writer; and with his general conclusions as to matters of fact, there is perhaps still more reason to be satisfied, because they are deduced from premises not altogether identical with our own. The purely *doctrinaire* mind of the illustrious French statesman regards mainly the intellectual aspect of the great social phenomena with which we are now concerned. It is not that he ignores the political or the ethical importance of the work of the Church in forming the character of mediæval society. Far from it; no one has insisted upon this with more emphasis and clearness. But his view of the whole is, as we have said, a "doctrinaire" view, and not a spiritual view. He regards Christianity as a belief gradually growing into a dogma, and crystallizing, as it were, into an institution, rather than as an actual kingdom of God, a Society founded upon a Person, and depending for its life upon perpetual union with that person as its Head, and obedience to his will as its law. The Christian society, according to this view, advanced through several stages to its final form. First it was a mere aggregate of persons, an association based upon a common belief, and held together by the bond of common convictions, or, as we may add, common hopes and fears, common trials, sufferings, and dangers. The indeterminate character of its doctrines and

institutions was soon changed when the circumstances changed under which they had struggled into existence, and the difficulties were removed which had impeded their development. The process of crystallization is quickly seen in visible action: in a few years we have dogma, discipline, formulas of belief employed as tests, a regular magistracy, in a word, all the essentials of an organized society. These dogmas, reduced to Creeds, remain for ever what they were, but the exact nature of the discipline, and the exact functions of the magistracy, were not, in primitive times, very carefully defined, and therefore still continue open to dispute. What remains certain is, that in the earliest stage of its existence, the Christian society was rather a congregation of persons animated by a common sentiment, than a clearly-defined body possessing the systematic organization, or the functions and appliances, of regular government. And when, again, this inchoate society began to assume form and substance, when the laws of its earthly existence were gradually working themselves out, it was long before that sharp line of demarcation was drawn, which ultimately separated the priesthood and the people. The weight of actual authority, so far as there existed any defined authority at all, reposed with the main body of the faithful. "It was the body of the faithful," says Guizot, "which prevailed, both as to the choice of functionaries and as to the adoption of discipline, or even doctrine. The church government and the Christian people were not as yet distinct." Before the middle of the fifth century all this had been changed. The Church had become a recognized institution, possessing all the signs, external and internal, of an independent, self-contained, and self-ruling society. It had its own laws, discipline, legislative authority, and duly subordinated functionaries; it had a very peculiar constitution, administered on very exclusive principles; it had, in short, become a new sovereign society, with a regular system of government,

subsisting by the side of that other sovereign society called the State, and entering into relations with it upon terms of equality. And what then, under the circumstances, did it do for the strange, confused world which was gradually growing up around its gates? Very much indeed, is the reply of M. Guizot, or rather, almost everything.

To this conclusion we cannot but assent, though his conception of the character and growth of the Christian Church, as we have just given it, is surely somewhat empty and barren. We instinctively feel that it is incomplete; that it accounts neither for the strength of the primitive Church nor for its weakness; that it fails to grasp the secret principle of life indwelling in its formal type, which gave it force to grow up from the grain of mustard into the great tree, whose branches overshadow the earth. Nothing is more surprising than the fact that educated and intelligent men, who regard "Christianity" as a set of right notions and beliefs about divine verities and human duties, and other difficult problems concerning the moral order of the universe, should be satisfied that as such alone it could have passed successfully through its terrible baptism of blood; could have lived down an existing and ancient order of things, supported by sensuality clothed with absolute power, and could have rendered itself the actual master of a new order of things, where the ultimate appeal was to the will of a savage, and whose law was the sword. To those who regard the Christian Church, not as any system of beliefs, however true, or combination of sentiments, however right, and good, and ennobling, but as a real Kingdom under a divine Head and a divine Ruler, and expanding, after the law of its being, through all the world, until it absorb the world,—these things are not strange. They are the necessary outgrowth of a spiritual seed, and they follow the analogy of those other material growths which the Divine Author of the universe visibly displays before the eyes of men. Nothing so in-

tangible as an opinion could have survived the corrupting poison of the old civilization, or the rude shock of the barbarian arms. Truth, we hear perpetually, is ever triumphant: the Idea is ever victor over the Sword. But truth, to be strong, must be clothed with personality, the Idea must be embodied in the Man;—the divine Idea in the divine Man. Christ Himself, and not simply the truths taught by Christ, is the real subject and substance of Christian revelation; and from this it follows, as a corollary, that if "Christianity," as it is called, unveils to men not a system but a Person, the method of its development must be analogous to the development of a personal influence and power. If, as M. Guizot asserts, in its origin it was indeterminate, this indeterminateness did not exist in its essence or in its principles, but it appeared to attach to them, because, under the pressure of adverse circumstances, it was impossible for the actual form to be instantaneously developed in full accordance with the type. Yet the Kingdom of Christ existed potentially in the small society of Galilean fishermen, as truly and certainly as in the acorn exists the oak. And there is nothing indeterminate—at least in the sense of indefinite and vague—in the seed which contains a living principle, destined to be developed in a predetermined form, although that form in its fulness is as yet invisible to our imperfect perceptions. I should not be justified in assuming the province of the theologian or the religious teacher, and nothing is further removed from my wishes or intention; but this much, perhaps, is rendered necessary by apparent divergence from the authority of a great name. Not indeed that M. Guizot falls into the delusion of believing that a mere theory of religious belief is capable of maintaining itself in stormy times simply in its own impalpable shape. No one has seen the impossibility more clearly or stated it with more force. But while recording the fact, he seems to have failed in giving any sufficient reason for the fact.

With this reservation we may adopt his language, remarkable alike, as it is, for eloquence and truth.

"Had it not been a 'Church,' I cannot say what might have happened to it amid the fall of the Roman empire. I confine myself to simply human considerations; I put aside every element which is foreign to the natural consequences of natural facts: had Christianity been, as in the earlier times, no more than a belief, a sentiment, an individual conviction, we may believe that it would have sunk amidst the dissolution of the Empire and the invasion of the barbarians. In later times, in Asia and in all the north of Africa, it sunk under an invasion of the same nature,—under the invasion of the Moslem barbarians; it sunk then, although it subsisted in the form of an institution or constituted Church. With much more reason might the same thing have happened at the moment of the fall of the Roman empire. There existed, at that time, none of those means by which, in the present day, moral influences establish themselves, or offer resistance, independently of institutions; none of those means whereby a pure truth, a pure idea, obtains a great empire over minds, governs actions, and determines events. Nothing of the kind existed in the fourth century, to give a like authority to ideas and to personal sentiments. It is clear that a society, strongly organized and strongly governed, was indispensable to struggle against such a disaster, and to issue victorious from such a storm. I do not think that I say more than the truth, in affirming, that at the end of the fourth and the commencement of the fifth centuries, it was the Christian Church that saved Christianity; it was the Church with its institutions, its magistrates, and its power, that vigorously resisted the internal dissolution of the Empire and barbarism; that conquered the barbarians, and became the bond, the medium, and the principle of civilization, between the Roman and barbarian worlds.

"There was an immense advantage in the presence of a moral influence, of a moral power, of a power which reposed solely upon convictions, and upon moral creeds and sentiments, amidst the deluge of material power which at this time inundated society. Had the Christian Church not existed, the whole world must have been abandoned to purely material force; the Church alone exercised moral power. It did more; it sustained, it spread abroad the idea of a rule, of a law superior to all human laws. It proposed, for the salvation of humanity, the fundamental belief, that there exists, above all human laws, a law which is denominated, according to periods and customs, sometimes reason, sometimes the divine law, but which, everywhere and always, is the same law under different names."*

The questions which naturally suggest themselves, in reference to the facts which these words describe, are numerous and important. But our purpose will be satisfied if, in directing our attention to one or two of them, we shall have enabled the student to understand the *class* of questions upon the solution of which, a right conception of the continuity of history depends. What were the external circumstances which conferred upon the Church the power and the opportunity of acting upon the barbarian nationalities, as strongly as she did? What were the means she employed for the purpose? What were the results of her influence during those centuries which preceded the concentration of the civil power in the hands of Charlemagne? What was the form which the Church, as wielder of these great powers, finally assumed, and why did she assume this form rather than any other?

With respect to the first question, we must once more repeat it was from the position acquired by the Church in the Empire that she mainly derived her power of operating upon the barbarian world. When the platform of the im-

* Guizot, History of Civilization in Europe, Lect. ii.

perial administration was adopted as the basis for ecclesiastical government, an immense step was taken towards identifying the two in the eyes of men, or we should rather say, towards preparing the world to accept the substitution of the one for the other, when the mission of the Empire had been fulfilled, and the mission of the Church was about to begin. When it was discovered that the imperial system could no longer support the framework which had once held together the civilized world, it became clear that the Empire itself had played out its part in the great drama of human history, and that, as an institution, it must pass away. But in the mean time another system had been incorporated with it, which retained something of the ancient form, cropping up, so to speak, in the well-known places, and presenting the old familiar aspects. And, moreover, though the Empire, as a government, could no longer maintain its stand, or confront the new world of Teutonic birth as a living power, yet it must not be imagined that its traditions, its civilizing influences, and the intellectual forces which it had once wielded with such effect, perished utterly at the same time. They were still there, but they clustered round a different centre. That centre was the Church. But how came it to pass that a society professing only spiritual aims and objects acquired political functions, and presented itself before the world as a political power? The answer we have already given in part, when we recounted the motives which induced Constantine, or it would be more correct to say, the circumstances which rendered it necessary for Constantine, to throw himself into the arms of the Christian party in the Empire, and to avail himself of the social strength and administrative ability which he found in that party, for the purpose of firmly establishing his throne.* But it must also be understood that, from the very nature and necessity of the case, the chief officers of the newly-constituted Christian society had

* Lecture XII.

long been exercising civil functions among their brethren, and that when society in general became Christian, these functions did not pass away. The well-known directions of St. Paul to his Corinthian converts, though subject to some variety of interpretation, without doubt inculcate the propriety of referring all civil differences in a Christian community to the judgment of its own members, rather than to the existing heathen authorities: and the principle seemed to rest upon the distinct directions of Christ himself. "St. Augustine says, once and again, that it was the apostle who instituted ecclesiastical judges, and laid the burden of secular causes upon them. By which he means, that the apostle gave a general direction to Christians to choose abitrators, and that custom determined this office particularly to the bishops, as the best qualified, by their wisdom and probity, to discharge it." * The force of the apostolic injunction seems to depend upon the contrast between the believing arbitrator and the unbelieving pagan functionary. But when, in process of time, this contrast no longer existed, when the officer of the State professed the Christian faith as well as the officer of the Church, the most cogent reason for the practice may seem to have passed away. Yet the practice continued, and that too, not only in accordance with the claims of ecclesiastical authority, but by the direct sanction of the imperial law. "Constantine confirmed all such decisions of bishops in their consistories, and ordained that no secular judges should have any power to reverse or disannul them, forasmuch as the priests of God were to be preferred before any judge. And Sozomen adds that he gave leave to all litigants to refer their causes to the determination of bishops, whose sentence should stand good, and be as authentic as if it had been the decision of the emperor himself, and that the governors of every province and their officers should be obliged to put their decrees into execution.† The clergy also possessed,

* Bingham, ii. 7, 2. † *Ibid.* ii. 7, 3.

and alone possessed, the privilege of being tried, even on capital charges, by their peers,—a privilege which, when extended to all classes, we rightly regard as one of the safeguards of liberty, but which, confined to a single class, is as surely one of the worst abuses of despotism. To this privilege was added the right of sanctuary and exemption from civil offices and fiscal burdens. Now this was to concede to the spiritual society a power of that sort which the common experience of mankind has discovered to be always progressive, always encroaching, always inspired with the will, and generally supplied with means, to extend the sphere of its action. Some of the limitations imposed upon it were impracticable, others were openly violated under the plea, and often the well-founded plea, of necessity. Thus grew up an "imperium in imperio," a power which, when the course of events undermined the sovereign power, was ready to take its place, not only in the discharge of some of its important functions, but in the general estimation of mankind.

That churchmen and bishops soon became the real statesmen, administrators, rulers, and even warriors of the age,—the only "hommes de politique" of those stormy days,—will readily be admitted by any one who has made himself thoroughly acquainted with the position occupied by Cyprian at Carthage, Cyril at Alexandria, Jerome and Leo at Rome, Ambrose at Milan, Augustine and Synesius in North Africa, Epiphanus at Pavia, Severinus in the Danubian provinces, Leo of Narbonne at the court of the Visigoth Euric, Boniface at the court of the Austrasian Pepin, Sidonius in Auvergne, Martin, Anianus, Remigius, Nicasius, and many others, in different parts of Gaul. To this intellectual and social influence, large as it was, must be added the influence of immense wealth, acquired by the bounty of believing emperors, or the confiscation of the lands and endowments attached to heathen temples.

We have already remarked upon the peculiar connection of the Church with the civil society and its government, which was produced by the conduct of Constantine and his successors with respect to the decision of theological questions, and the appointment to ecclesiastical offices. It is easy to see, without entering into further detail, how the authority of the Church and of churchmen had grown into a substantive element of the later empire, and became part, as it were, of its idea; how inseparably it was mixed up with imperial administration, and how it gradually assumed greater prominence before the eyes of those who were contemplating Roman society from without, when that society was losing strength and dignity every day; when the bonds of its cohesion were visibly dissolving, and its external aspect ceased to strike the imagination of the beholder with the accustomed awe. And so it came to pass, that when Barbarism had forced the last defences of the Empire, and was about to trample civilization in the dust, there was found behind the shattered defences of imperialism, a new power, ordained by the providence of God, to stay the invader's steps, and arrest his uplifted sword. As the two societies, Roman and Teutonic, found themselves face to face, they were surprised to discover a third, arising between them, and preventing that utter and unconditional destruction which must have been the result of their own collision. In every diocese, province, parish, and city of the Empire, when the banner of the barbarian appeared on the horizon, or his battle-axe thundered at the gates, there was found by the side of the civil officer, the officer of the Spiritual Society, often superior to his colleague in recognized authority, always his superior in general intelligence, capacity for government, and the affections of the people. But this was not all. Universally the wretched Curial took to flight, and abandoned a duty which he deemed it impossible to fulfil; even the tax-gatherer disappeared from a scene in which, henceforth,

his occupation was gone, and where all questions of property were awaiting the stern solution of the barbarian sword. But the Bishop stood fast with his people, and at his post; the Church remained erect, when the Empire fell. The result was what might have been anticipated. The Teuton or Slavic chief, who had at last crossed swords with Rome, as he passed across the shattered walls of the vanquished town, found himself confronted by the Christian Church, and in the Christian Church he not unnaturally saw the image of that great mysterious Power which had overshadowed his youth with the grandeur of its traditions, and filled his far-distant forests with the terrors of its name. Instead of the imperial edifices, ensigns, troops, and officers, he encountered the gorgeous pageantry of the Catholic Church, beautiful temples dedicated to an unknown God, and a venerable priest surrounded by his trembling people, who, in the hour of their extreme peril, were looking to him for aid, as to a being of supernatural power. Sometimes the innate ferocity of the barbarian broke forth, and he dyed his battle-axe in the blood of those who had so audaciously crossed his path. Yet this very blood, when in after-years he was brought into close relations with the Catholic faith, became a terrible burden upon his conscience, and forced him to works of repentance and reparation calculated to magnify still more the power against which he had dared to lift a sacrilegious hand. Generally, however, it fell out far otherwise; the weapon dropped from the victor's grasp, as it dropped from the grasp of his ancestors, when they stood before the grey fathers of the Republic, on the threshold of the Senate-house. The calm dignity of the Christian priest, the courage which sustained him when Roman official and even Roman soldier had fled; the mysterious bond which united him, in the eyes of the barbarian, to a Divinity whose unknown power assumed a more awful aspect, because unknown—all these things naturally com-

bined to create in the invader's mind a feeling of vague respect, which the Churchman well knew how to mature into reverence and adoration. The Christian Church, therefore, in addition to the effect which it produced upon the religious instinct of the new comers,—an effect very powerful in its character, notwithstanding the wild passions with which it had to deal,—became to them the visible representative of the intelligence, order, and undefined superiority which barbarism, however savage, always sees in civilization, however corrupt. "In the midst of the disorganization produced by so many miseries," says M. Thierry, speaking of the state of Gaul during the invasion of the Huns, "the civil and military magistrates were found defaulters; the curials deserted their post to escape the outrageous fiscal exactions of the Government or the requisitions of the enemy; but the bishop remained chained by a spiritual bond to his flock. It was then the bishop, whom the barbarians ever found before them as the sole functionary representing the Roman hierarchy; it was the bishop alone whom the citizens could consult as their counsellor and guide. Laws originating in the necessity of the times conferred upon the bishop civil functions, which made him little by little a veritable magistrate, the first in the city; but the force of circumstances conferred upon him many other functions, and made of him, as the case might be, a decemvir, a prefect, a commissioner, or a manager of taxes, the general of an army. It was this state, but ill understood in subsequent ages, which produced the immense number of martyrdoms that figure in the legendary history of the fifth century; for every bishop put to death by the barbarians was, in the eyes of his people, slain for his faith." To recount examples would be to repeat a large portion of the ecclesiastical history of these centuries, and of those very apocryphal legends entitled the "Lives of the Saints." Yet the student who wishes to gather from original sources the

real character of the relations between the bishops and the barbarian chiefs, should read the biography of St. Remi of Rheims, whose influence over Clovis, the triumphant victor of Tolbiac, may be said to have laid the foundation of Catholic Christianity in France. Hincmar who, two centuries later, was archbishop of the same See, has handed down to us an elaborate account of the marvellous conversion and splendid baptism of this veritable "eldest son of the Church." It is a tale of singular interest, the history of an event pregnant above any other in those centuries with great consequences for the future of Christendom. We have already seen St. Agnan at Orleans in the presence of the Huns. St. Germain plays a similar part during the sanguinary invasion of the Alani, and parish after parish on the banks of the Seine and Yonne attest the pious and grateful remembrance of his name. It was but the other day that St. Géneviève re-asserted her dominion over the fickle minds of her countrymen; and the heroine of the graceful legend which dates from the days of Attila, has won back again from the greatest men of France, that magnificent temple which, from the site of the Basilica of Clovis, looks down upon the tumultuous streets of Paris. No less renown clings to the memory of St. Martin of Tours. Originally a Roman legionary, he had fought beneath the Labarum of the sons of Constantine and the Pagan eagles of Julian; but the powerful influence of the new faith which he had adopted, prompted him to deeds of charity and zeal, and these deeds, despite his own conscientious repugnance, raised him to the episcopate. His life was one uninterrupted missionary labour among barbarous tribes, who revered the old traditions, and bowed before the old idols of the land. To him, as to the champion of Christianity against Druidism, is to be ascribed not only the spiritual triumph of the former, but the final victory of struggling civilization in the north and west of Gaul. Nor did the effect of his labours

terminate with his life. "From the tomb of St. Martin of Tours," says the enthusiastic Capefigue, "extends that immense circle of preaching and conversion which developed itself among the populations who still retained the Arian creed or the antique superstitions of the southern Gothic kingdom and Spain." * With the name of Martin must always be associated that of his teacher, adviser, and friend, Hilary of Poitiers, the great opponent of Arianism, and asserter of Catholic Christianity in Gaul. These men did not stand alone; they are merely specimens of a very numerous class. The names of Honoratus at Arles, Cassianus at Marseilles, Severinus at Bordeaux, Medard at Soissons, Gregory at Langres, Claude at Besançon, Sidonius at Clermont, Marcel at Paris, Anianus at Orleans, Nicasius at Rheims, Lupus at Troyes, with many others, were long familiar words in the mouths of men, and represent the real agency by which, in those tempestuous times, the foundations of modern civilization were firmly laid.

Next in order to the personal influence exercised by these men, we may say that two other important agencies performed a civilizing and constructive work upon the age—the assemblies of the bishops in Council, and the institution of the monastic Orders. The Councils proposed to themselves the double object of conserving primitive doctrine amid the corruptions of the time, and humanizing the savage habits of the barbarian invaders. Clovis convened a council at Orleans, in imitation of the œcumenic council convened by Constantine at Nice; and the council itself imitated its prototype, by addressing to the Frank king a letter upon the doctrine of the Trinity. The councils of Epona, of Lyons, of Chartres, and others less well known, not only decided questions of Church dogma and discipline, but they dealt with the most important social problems of the epoch,—the relations between the sexes,—the limitations of legal mar-

* Capefigue, vol. iv. p. 193.

riage,—the mutual duties of master and slave,—public banquets and festivals, for which they supplied sumptuary rules, —and, finally, even what we should call sanatory regulations —such as the prohibition to employ for food the flesh of animals which had died from disease or from the bites of others. One particular instance of the excellent results flowing from the Church legislation may be mentioned here, even though it should be necessary to recur to it again. The admirable provisions of Constantine in favour of the slave had been forgotten or ignored during that chaotic era which followed the advent of the barbarians; but they re-appear in the famous edict of 614 A.D., promulgated under the inspiration of ecclesiastical advisers. The slave is once again recognized as a man; he is no longer a chattel; his life is his own by a sacred, inalienable right; it may not be sacrificed, except at the bidding of the law: "Nemo etiam servus nisi lege jubente occidetur." * Such a provision was an immense step in advance of the existing system, or, rather, the existing want of system, in the relations of the free and the slave class. Future legislation moved onward in the same direction; the rights of the master over his slave were gradually restricted from absolute power over life and personal liberty, to a claim upon the labour of his hands. And here, in connection with the subject of Church legislation, we may, perhaps, most fitly remark how largely the authority of the clergy and their social influence was increased, by the fact that jurisprudence rested in their hands. This naturally followed from the ignorance of the barbarians upon the subject, or their disinclination to make themselves acquainted with it. The Merovingian monarch, or the Mayor of the palace, in the royal demesnes, the great rural proprietor in his own, dispensed in criminal cases a rude sort of justice beneath some forest oak. This was, however, based upon the most imperfect of all judicial principles, the prin-

* De Cellier, Histoire des Classes Laborieuses, p. 52.

ciple of the *wehr-geld,* or pecuniary compensation for loss and damage; and, as the dispensers of this antique system of law possessed a personal interest in the fines which it inflicted, they naturally maintained its administration in their own hands. But all the serious questions concerning civil contracts, wills, legitimacy, succession to property, and the like, were handed over to the Church, partly because the Church, as the only educated body in the country, alone retained the traditions of Roman jurisprudence; and partly, also, because with the Church rested the validity of marriage, the primary bond of civil society, and the source of its most important rights. In the hands of ecclesiastics, of necessity, remained the interpretation and the executive of the canon law, and so much of the civil law as survived the fall of the Empire. The remark has often been made, and it is undoubtedly correct, that the first great symptom of reaction against ecclesiastical authority is to be found in the revived study of the Roman jurists, and the assertion of their independence by the Civil lawyers, more especially in France. When the idea that justice could possibly have a basis irrespective of religion, as interpreted by the dogmatic decisions of the Church, once established itself in men's minds, one of the strongest supports upon which the whole sacerdotal system rested was shaken to its very foundation.

But it is time to say a few words upon the third great social influence to which we have referred,—the institution of the monastic Orders. The monastic Orders, more especially that of St. Benedict, may without exaggeration be said to have saved agriculture, the mechanical arts, and literature, in southern Europe. We have seen how the first was affected by the fall of the Empire, or, it is more correct to say, by the social conditions which made the fall of the Empire a necessity; for, even in the most flourishing days of imperial rule, the work of rural depopulation had rapidly spread over the most fertile spots of Italy and Gaul. "Lati-

fundia perdidere Italiam ;" we cannot too often repeat the all-important fact. The inroad of the barbarian armies, who lived from hand to mouth upon the plunder which their swords might chance to win, and who took no steps to replenish by cultivation what they had carried off by violence, went near to complete what the tyranny of the imperial fiscus and the luxurious caprice of the large proprietors had so fatally begun. Then the great monastic Orders stepped in, and undertook the work which the public administration had abandoned, and which private enterprise was too feeble or too timid to begin. It was in the East that monasticism had its birth ; and in the East it assumed that fervid yet dreamy character which it derived from the nature of the climate and the disposition of the people. Eastern monasticism, therefore, had a type of its own. Professor Kingsley, with that daguerreotyping power which he possesses beyond any other writer of the time, has placed before our eyes a picture of the desolate Thebaid, its yellow surface glistening like a sheet of brass beneath a burning sun, its dark cliffs upheaved from an ocean of sand which seems to trickle again in scanty threads down their rugged seams, the cavern-tombs carved in the rock by long-forgotten hands, the subterranean chambers covered with the gaudy imagery of a licentious Eastern fancy,—a terrible mockery of life glaring upon the eternal silence of the tomb ; the giant monuments of primeval art and worship broken and disfigured, lotus-wreathed pillars, or melancholy Sphinx half shrouded by the climbing sand ; and amid this speaking solitude, this grave of nature and humanity, the young Philammon, full of vigorous life and power, but doomed by his monastic vows to ponder there for ever undisturbed on life and death and judgment to come, and the agonies of the everlasting fire. Such, except when roused by some spasmodic impulse to passionate fury, was monasticism in the East ;—an abnegation of that con-

tinual struggle with the moral and material world which is the work of man upon the earth. But Western monasticism was of another stamp. The more practical genius of the people, the greater vitality and vigour of social interests, even amid the wild confusion which followed upon the fall of the Empire, the necessities imposed on man by a harsher soil and colder sky,—all these things imposed a different character on the institution as it gradually took shape and settled down amid the new populations in southern and western Europe. From the height of Monte Casino the great Order of St. Benedict inaugurated a social revolution, as great, perhaps, as any which the world has seen, yet so unobtrusive were its movements, that it has now become difficult, if not impossible, to trace the steps of their progress. St. Benedict, by consecrating the work of the hands with reading the Scriptures and the worship of God, as the three normal occupations of human life, accomplished, whether intentionally or not, an immense result which had never been accomplished by the elder civilization. The Georgics of Virgil may, as Mr. Merivale says, have been meant to "glorify labour," or, as recent commentators have suggested, to arrest that decay of agriculture which, as we have seen, so largely contributed to the decadence of the Empire. The somewhat artificial and pompous praises of Cicero had probably a similar object. But the experiment was unsuccessful: the "glorification" was an apotheosis;—the praises fell upon unsympathetic ears. The artificial landscape gardening of Pliny and his contemporaries cannot be regarded as anything but a step in the wrong direction. It was left to the Order of St. Benedict, by raising the conception of labour from a degradation to a duty, to give to labour its true place and dignity in the world, and to originate the great social question of our age, which has been gradually absorbing all other questions into itself. The Benedictine monastery, by reviving the traditions of Roman

agriculture, which had been almost trampled out under the horsehoofs of Attila and the rude tread of the warriors of the North,—by employing the brethren of the Order in the cultivation of land, and encouraging in the like labour the wretched remnants of the population who crowded around the monasteries as the only sanctuaries of peace and security in those perilous times; by improving the mechanical appliances used in tilling the ground, and other operations of the kind;—by these and by similar means the Benedictine establishments became little centres of active and humanizing industry, which gradually changed the face of the country, and improved the condition of the people. The monk, toiling with his own hands from morning to night in the open fields, taught the people of the new world around him by the best of all teaching, practical example, the necessary arts of common life, to clear and cultivate the land, to plough, to sow, to reap, to grind the corn, to raise vegetables and breed stock, and to work the precious and useful metals for the requirements of the household or the decoration of the temple of God. Were waste lands to be restored to cultivation, the Benedictines undertook the task. Was it necessary to redeem an estate from fiscal tyranny or barbarian ravage, the Benedictines found the funds. Had the whole farming stock, the agricultural implements, and the cattle of an entire district been swept away, it was from the stores of some Benedictine abbey that they were replenished. To the Benedictines also is ascribed the first employment in the West—perhaps it would be more correct to say the revival—of one of those simple mechanic contrivances which often originate a real social revolution. "The railway and the steamship" have been united by the first of living poets with "the thoughts that shake mankind:" Mr. Frank Newman has shown, in a very interesting lecture, how immense and diversified have been the results of that humble and almost unnoticed precursor of them both—the invention of

springs for wheeled conveyances. But the scholar will classify the application by the Benedictines of water-power to the grinding of corn in the same category, when he remembers how much of human misery and degradation was connected with the ceaseless and brutalizing toil of that employment in the ancient world. And when he considers the gradual diminution in the price of flour which the increased facilities for its production brought about, the political economist will be led to a similar conclusion.

But it was not agriculture alone which benefited by the example and exertions of the Benedictines,—and when speaking of the Benedictines at this early period, we speak of monasticism in general, for the great Order had absorbed or completed all the struggling foundations hitherto attempted by Martin, Cassian, and Columban. Urban industry was awakened and maintained by the same agency. When the barbarian bands, exasperated by resistance, carried the great cities of the Empire by assault, they not only consumed with fire, or shattered with their battle-axes, the various and splendid appliances of Roman luxury, elaborated by ancient art, but by annihilating their occupation, they drove the artificers themselves to despair, and dispersed them as resourceless fugitives among the rural districts. The precious metals disappeared, when the demand for "articles de luxe," and the art of fabricating them, had also disappeared. Moreover, as is always the case, just as poverty increased and skill declined, the class of articles considered to be luxuries, was very greatly enlarged, until at last it comprised many of the common necessaries of life. But here, as in the former case, the Church and the monastic establishments interfered to prevent the entire disappearance from society of the useful and ornamental arts. The construction of churches and abbeys—many of them displaying elaborate beauty—revived the traditions of ancient architectural art, and these were handed down to mediæval times

by guilds of scientific masons, living under a semi-monastic rule. It is mainly owing to these men, that the mystic power of the Gothic genius modified the old Roman architectural magnificence, by infusing into it a spirit of its own, and working itself out in stone or marble, uplifted those venerable piles which, in their vast and solitary grandeur, involuntarily stay our steps and check our breath, as we come suddenly upon them, amid the glare and tumult of our great cities. Again, the vessels of gold and silver required for the Catholic worship, the rich stuffs, laces, silks, and jewels forming the decoration of the altar, the gorgeous vestments of the officiating clergy themselves, called forth a refinement of skill, and delicate beauty of workmanship, which assuredly would not otherwise have been found in the rude courts of Burgundian, Frank, or Lombard kings. St. Eligius, or St. Eloi, as he is ordinarily called, the patron of the fraternity of goldsmiths, in some respects the most remarkable man of his time, was a worker in the precious metals, and continued his employment even when the inmate of a palace and a councillor of state.

Once more, the literature of the age was in the same hands. So far as it was original, it is true that it consisted in little more than martyrologies and legends of the Saints; but it would be unreasonable altogether to despise these remarkable products of an entirely abnormal intellectual state. They were probably devoured with more appetite and more intelligence, than a generation fed on newspapers and reviews would be inclined to consider possible. Nor should we be surprised at the fact. They were an expression of the triumph of our higher over our lower nature, of mind over brute force and violence, quite as appropriate to the circumstances of the age, as dissertations on social science and political economy are appropriate to the nineteenth century. At any rate, they did their work, and were not without their use. They brought the super-

natural to the aid of the feeble against the strong, and acted through the imagination, upon minds not easily accessible to the arguments by which reason enforces the claims of justice and morality. It was well in that iron age—an age of blind passion and brute force—that the spiritual nature of man should assert itself in any way. It was well that the rude intelligence of the barbarian should be taught that there was something in a man which could not be burnt out of him by fire, or hewn away from him by steel. All honour, therefore, to the poor monkish solitaries, who in the depth of their convents laboriously indited those strange supernatural tales. They too were of the great humanizing brotherhood of letters, they too were doing a true work for their times; they were a power in their own generation, a power working palpably for good, for the reproof of the proud and violent, and the defence of the feeble; for the assertion of something better and loftier in humanity than the mere physical strength, or animal cunning, which seemed to govern the world around them. But the monasteries did even more than this. "The literature of the two last centuries," says an able writer, "has brought to light the services which the monks have rendered to letters and science, by transmitting to us writing, the manufacture of parchment and paper, and all the material appliances required to fix and transmit human thought. An industrial epoch like our own should not forget that the greatest part of the mechanic arts is indebted to them for the same service, that every great abbey was of use in preserving the industrial products as well as the manuscript writings of antiquity, that it was a school of trade and of the arts, at the same time that it was a school of letters and a model farm.*

Such were some of the happy results brought about by the monastic orders and more particularly by the rule of St. Benedict. But the Benedictine Abbey was everywhere:

* De Cellier, ch. iii. 3.

high on the Calabrian headlands, listening to the monotonous thunder of the surf below; half hidden amid groves of beech and oak in the inmost recesses of the Apennines; on both slopes of the maritime Alps; in still Roman Provence; perched aloft on the black basaltic hills of green Auvergne; studding with white flocks the fat pastures through which the stately Loire sweeps like a silver bow; on the vine-clad terraces which overlook the Rhine; overspreading with bright green patches of growing cereals the brown heaths and half-cleared forests of distant Britain; in every spot where civilization had planted her footsteps in western Europe, arose the grey towers of that devoted brotherhood, to be the home and nursery of religion and peace and the arts of peace.

It cannot be denied, highly as we have spoken of them, that these are not the most exalted principles, that this is not the most excellent practice which is demanded of the Christianity of our own age. But could the virtues which now most brightly adorn our Christian life, have flourished or even subsisted in the Merovingian era?

"Such Christianity," answers Dean Milman, "would have made no impression, even if it could have existed, on a people who still retained something of their Teutonic severity of manners, and required, therefore, something more imposing, a sterner and more manifest self-denial, to keep up their religious veneration. The detachment of the clergy from all earthly ties, left them at once more unremittingly devoted to their unsettled life as missionaries, more ready to encounter the perils of this wild age; while (at the same time) the rude minds of the people were more struck by their unusual habits, by the strength of character shown in their labours, their mortifications, their fastings, and perpetual religious services. All these being, in a certain sense, monks, the bishop and his clergy cœnobites, or if they lived separate, only less secluded and less stationary than

other ascetics, wherever Christianity spread, monasteries, or religious foundations with a monastic character, arose. These foundations, as the religion aspired to soften the habits, might seem to pacify the face of the land. They were commonly placed, by some intuitive yearning after repose and security, in spots, either themselves beautiful by nature, by the bank of the river, in the depth of the romantic wood, under the shelter of the protecting hill; or in such as became beautiful from the superior care and culture of the monks—the draining of the meadows, the planting of trees, the home circle of garden or orchard, which employed or delighted the brotherhood."

But independently of the influence exercised by the Church upon society through the action of the monastic orders, there were other no less important results of her presence, which must have existed, even had there been no such institution as monasticism at all. Had the old society never been broken up, it is probable that the Church either would never have succeeded in removing from it the canker of slavery, or only succeeded after most protracted efforts, and at the expense of a sanguinary revolution. But the violent disruption of all the political ties which had held the imperial system together, and the new world of thought and sentiment, as well as the strange confusion of social distinctions which the advent of the barbarians produced, gave to the Church an opportunity for the regeneration of the slave, which to her eternal glory she did not neglect. As a general rule at first, the barbarians looked at persons and things very much as they found them; and altogether ignored, or failed to comprehend, the delicate gradations of personal rank and right as the elaborate system of Roman jurisprudence had established them. Occupation in manual labour is a palpable mark of class distinction always easy to understand. Among the Teutonic nations themselves it separated the serf plainly and broadly from his superiors.

With the serf, therefore, when they conquered the Empire, they confounded all whom they perceived to be engaged in his ordinary occupations, the coloni and the members of the agricultural guilds or colleges, as well as the slave. Nor did they for a moment trouble themselves to inquire whether the old régime had made any difference between them. A clear conception of the distinction, and the recollection of ancient privilege, doubtless remained with the individuals themselves; but the whole tendency of things was to amalgamate them into one body, and equalize, in a social sense, all the members of it in their masters' eyes. Now it came to pass that the influence of the Church was exercised to bring about the very same results; but the Church approached the question from a different point of view, and worked out its designs in a very different manner. If the policy and conduct of the Church aimed at creating the same social equality among the lower classes of the population as was produced by the supercilious negligence of the civil power, it was not because she regarded all as equally degraded, but because, by her sanction of mixed marriages and her frequent practice of enfranchisement, she laboured to elevate the whole body to, at least, that species of equality which the profession of a common Christianity implies. One provision, which at an early period she had contrived to secure, produced a powerful effect both upon the condition of the serf class and upon her own power. It was this: the operation of causes already noticed, soon swept away in the practice of the barbarian settlers, all the special privileges assured to the Roman colonist by the old law, and placed him on the same footing as the other dependents attached to the land of the new proprietor. He sank to the position of the serf, and became "ascriptus glebæ;" not indeed in the strict sense of bound to any particular spot, but bound to the estate, and liable to be transferred from any one part of it to another. From this position there was one, and

one only, means of escaping. No proprietor could refuse freedom to a serf who was desirous of entering into holy orders, provided that the sum required to purchase his freedom was forthcoming; and of this, in all desirable cases, the Church took care. But in addition to this, the Church was itself the largest proprietor of land, and consequently of serfs, in the whole country. Almost universally throughout the Ecclesiastical estates, every practicable method was adopted for ameliorating the condition of the serf class, and for securing, where it was possible, their enfranchisement. If any accident had subjected its serfs to slavery elsewhere, the Church, as a proprietor, deemed itself under an obligation to redeem them. Hence it resulted that its jurisdiction, as has been declared by an excellent authority, "was far more enlightened, far more conscientious, than that of the secular proprietors; and the cultivators of the soil found their condition approach in practice much more closely to civil freedom."* The same writer remarks that owing to the influence exercised by the clergy, at least where they almost necessarily became the men of administration and affairs, a similar result was brought about on the royal demesnes; so that in both an immense improvement was effected in the condition of the serf class, as compared with the condition of the same class on the estates of the rural nobility. But while under the powerful protection of the monarch and the ecclesiastics, the lower order of labourers was gradually more and more elevated above the degradation of ancient slavery, it fared differently with artisans and others of a higher class, such as the coloni, who occupied a privileged position in the old régime. They had naturally congregated towards the great centres of urban industry, and their combination into fraternities or colleges was a source of strength and profit, so long as the free exercise of their labour was possible, or a sufficient

* De Cellier, ch. iii. § 2.

demand for its products existed. But the barbarian invasion changed all this, annihilated the rights of the privileged classes, destroyed their occupation, broke up their societies, and scattered the members to struggle with want and poverty in the rural districts. The societies reappear curiously enough in the guilds of the Middle Ages, but the individuals were overwhelmed. It is to this elevation of one class, and depression of another, that we must ascribe the general equality which now begins to be found among those who subsist by the work of their hands; and this, in conjunction with other causes, plays its part in originating perhaps the greatest social revolution which the world has ever seen—the substitution of free for slave labour. It is impossible here to enter into the examination of a question, for the solution of which history affords such insufficient data, and which has perplexed so many able and learned men. But I have been anxious, at any rate, to indicate the share borne in this revolution by the Church, and one particular phase of her action will be rendered tolerably clear by the foregoing remarks. The great principle of Christian equality, of the equality of all mankind under the highest aspect in which they can be regarded, maintained by the Church amid many inconsistencies and many abuses, removed from the lowest class of humanity the burden of inhuman contempt, beneath which they had been bowed down to the earth, and broke for them a passage through that hitherto impregnable barrier with which their superiors had fenced themselves in. The slave, as we have already said, was recognized as a man. But the advancement of the slave in the social scale, and that also of the serf and artisan, received its most powerful influence from the fact that the Church threw wide her arms to all her children, and welcomed them all upon equal terms to her breast. The serf or the emancipated slave who had obtained an education, might become, by entrance into Orders, and as a matter of practice frequently did be-

come, an abbot or bishop, and took his seat in the highest council of the realm. The goldsmith Eligius reached the most exalted place in the Catholic hierarchy, yet condescended to practise his art when the inmate of a palace, and the most favoured companion and counsellor of kings. Blandina, the virgin martyr of Lyons, one of the most honoured in the noble catalogue of those who shed their blood for Christ, had been a slave; and her posthumous glory shed a light over all her class. Mathilda and Bathilda, the wives of Dagobert and Clovis II., had been slaves in their youth, and employed the privileges of royalty to benefit the class from which they sprung. To no other influence than to that of the Christian Church are these results to be ascribed. To her, and to her alone, they were possible. Could they have ever entered even into the conception of the legislators and philosophers of the heathen world?

As literature and jurisprudence were in the hands of the ecclesiastics, it is almost needless to say that education, such as it was, belonged to them as well. Every man of general intelligence or intellectual aspirations was attracted of necessity into the only sphere in which they could find scope for action, or perhaps subsist. And the fact had a reciprocal action upon society, for it imposed the cultivation of these qualities in others upon the only persons who possessed such themselves. If any knowledge of men or things, if any rudimental science or practical skill still lingered on into those dark times, they were to be found in the Church alone; and it is to the eternal honour of the Church, regarding only her secular influences, that she preserved law, literature, and art, as we have seen that she did preserve them, through a period of barbarian ignorance, when, but for her, they must have perished from Western Europe. And in considering the relation of the Church to the new society, when we endeavour to estimate the amount

of moral force which she exercised upon it, we must not omit the fact that she gave the education which that society possessed; that she was the teacher and schoolmaster, as well as the legist and theologian, of the age. Of the manner in which, and of the means whereby, she discharged this duty before the Caroline epoch, it is not easy to gather much from contemporary records. But the wise provisions and reforms enforced by the comprehensive genius of Charlemagne, plainly recognize the educating function as properly belonging, and having belonged, to the clergy, however much they may suggest that it was often grievously neglected or abused. Of the schools which the great emperor founded, and of his strong personal interest in their well-being, we have spoken elsewhere. Instruction in these schools was administered by ecclesiastics, and the language which Charlemagne employed to the scholars will show, perhaps more clearly than anything else, the amount of social and even political influence which was placed in the power both of the teachers and the taught. "Because you are rich, and are the sons of the principal men of my kingdom, you think that your birth and your wealth are sufficient for you, and that you stand in no need of these studies which would do you so much honour. You only think of dress, play, and pleasure; but I swear to you, I attach no estimation to these riches or this nobility, which bring you so much consideration; and if you do not quickly repair, by assiduous studies, the time you have lost in frivolity, never, no never, will you obtain sympathy from Charles."

There is yet another phase under which it is necessary to regard the action of the Church in Western Europe, if we would understand its real character and power. It was a missionary, and therefore a living Church. Missionary labour was then, as it is now, the best proof of vitality. The reason is inherent in the very nature of a true faith. There cannot be a true faith which is passive and obeys not the

law of expansion. Even the heathen Persius could admirably say of truth as it got hold of and possessed him,—

> "Quid didicisse, nisi hoc fermentum, et quæ semel intus
> Innata est, rupto jecore exierit caprificus?"

How inexpressibly more is this the case with Christian truth. If the mustard-seed do not germinate, if the leaven do not begin to leaven the lump, the vital principle in either is extinct. If the true spirit of the Gospel of the living Christ has entered into a man or a society, it must pass out and beyond them at the moment of their contact with others: it is as much a law of our spiritual being as it is a law of material nature, that the electric spark shall pass by sympathetic action into those bodies capable of receiving it. If there be no such sympathetic action, the spark is not there—the Christ is not there—the man or the society is spiritually dead. Tried by this decisive test, the Western Church is not found wanting. She exhibited this best and surest sign of vitality. Wheresoever some little centre of Christian life had been formed, and the Church as an institution had taken root, wherever an actual building had been erected for the purpose of worship, or a monastery or an abbey founded, from this spot the unresting spirit of Christian enterprise carried onward the glad message of the Gospel into the wildest localities and among the most savage tribes. A network of religious foundations was by this means extended over the whole surface of the territory acknowledging any allegiance, however incomplete, to the barbarian courts in which the Church had obtained a footing. In this way all northern Gaul, including the regions, half reclaimed from barbarism, which lay between the mouths of the Loire and the Rhine, and the still more savage and idolatrous tribes scattered among the Armorican bays and headlands, were reclaimed by slow degrees from their original paganism. Early British, or pre-Augustine Christianity, was propagated in the same

way, and the names of Augustine himself and his successors testify to the untiring missionary exertion of a later period. Nor was this all. The remote realms of barbarism, the inaccessible forests of eastern Germany and the Scandinavian peninsula, heard the voice of the heroic churchman of the West, beheld him plant the cross of Christ in their groves and high places, and were not seldom watered by his blood. It is not in ignorance of the glorious roll-call of martyrs and confessors that modern missionary labour has to show;—it is not in forgetfulness of Xavier, and Heber, and Martyn, and a hundred names honoured in all Christian communions, that we assert, not one among them all is to be placed before our immortal countryman Boniface, the apostle of Germany, and the converter of so many among her heathen tribes to the Faith of Christ. Who could read that marvellous history, so admirably recorded by Dean Milman, without feeling that Boniface is worthy to take his stand in the annals of missionary enterprise, and in the remembrance of Christian Europe, as the precursor and the antetype of all the heroic self-sacrificing spirits who have spread the Gospel of Christ from Borneo to Labrador?

And now we have briefly glanced at most of the influences exercised by the early Western Church upon the social life of the age, except her own especial influence. Restorer of agriculture and the useful arts, preserver of literature, emancipator of the slave,—legist, theologian, missionary,—in all these capacities she pervaded the barbarian world, gradually moulding it into the type of modern civilization. But all these things were as nothing compared to her spiritual power. Among an ignorant and superstitious generation, she became the actual embodiment on earth of everything that stirred their religious instincts, and connected them, by the bonds of hope and fear, with that unknown and awful future which lies beyond the grave. She disclosed to their eyes the mysterious vision of an unseen world; she held

the keys of heaven and hell: her consecrated officers impersonated the very Christ himself, for they claimed his divine power, and it was believed that they exercised it. Even her material dwelling-places,—the solemn aisles of cathedral or abbey,—were to her people like Bethel to the patriarch: "They were afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place: this is none other but the House of God, and this is the gate of Heaven!" The power of the religious sentiment, in an intelligent and cultivated age, may become super-sensuous altogether, and even the multitude may be acted upon by it, and act themselves under its inspiration, without the intervention of any material medium between the Divine Source of the sentiment and their own souls. But in a semi-barbarous age this is impossible. Religion clothes itself in concrete forms, and no power on earth can tear it away from the material images under which it subsists, and the material machinery by which it acts upon rude minds, entire strangers to any sort of metaphysical abstraction. Without these external appliances, religion, at such times, is volatilized away into a nonentity, or, to speak more accurately, it never assumes a substantial and intelligible shape. To conceive of Christ without his earthly Vicegerent and Representative, of religion without the Church, of moral duties without ecclesiastical rules, of spiritual doctrines without theological dogmas, of the atonement on the Cross without the Sacrifice of the Mass, was as difficult to the untutored intelligence of barbarians converted to civilization by men who taught these things, as it would have been for them to comprehend the "Ideas" of Plato, or the "Celestial Mechanism" of La Place. Without, then, wasting time upon a nearly exhausted topic, we may readily imagine for ourselves what must have been the extraordinary influence of the Church upon the new society, when we see her thus amassing and concentrating in herself all the power of all that religious sentiment which, even

in a comparatively irreligious age, agitates, moves, and controls the world around us. It is true that the sacerdotal system had not yet assumed the gigantic proportions which it acquired from the towering ambition and constructive genius of Hildebrand: it is true that no pope had as yet placed his heel upon the prostrate neck of a secular prince, or plunged a whole people into temporal misery and the peril of eternal perdition, as popes were found in after-times to wither with their paternal curse the England of John and the France of Philip Augustus; but these things were existing in their elements; the power was no longer in embryo, it was gradually growing and gathering strength,—its earlier developments were already seen. In an age of earnest, if credulous belief, it was no light thing to possess the absolute disposition of the objects of that belief,—to be gifted with the power of bestowing blessings undreamt of even in the fervour of an imagination unchastened by any discipline of the reason, or of inflicting tortures, felt with equal vividness of anticipation, hereafter to be endured amid the eternal and intolerable fire. Two things at once facilitated and perpetuated the exercise of this awful power,—the right to insist upon the practice of confession, and the right to refuse absolution to the disobedient. By the former, almost every man placed in the hands of the priest a weapon to be wielded against himself; and by the latter, he was delivered, bound, as it were, hand and foot, to the mercy of him who was to wield it. It was impossible for a moral despotism to be more absolute or more complete, because there existed no means of escape. In that age there were none of those intellectual sanctuaries for the sceptical; none of those convenient halting-places half way, where doubting respectability may pause on the descent from orthodox belief to open infidelity. Outside of the Church there existed no indifferent public, lost among whom the unfaithful churchman might escape her terrible censure, forget it, or be forgotten; outside of the Catholic dogma

there was no religion, nothing but open Atheism,—an undisputed institution of Satan, like idolatry, witchcraft, and magic, abhorred and abandoned of all men.

Mistress, then, of so many spells with which to work upon the imagination of men, and so much tangible, practical power to coerce their conduct; it is not surprising that the Catholic Church became all that Guizot has described her—the one great institution which saved society, and gave a character to the age. Succumbing occasionally to overwhelming political interests, or to the ferocity of animal passions as they raged in barbarian breasts, she yet stood erect through all the storms of the time, surviving anarchy, imperial centralization, and feudalism, and emerging as the author, or certainly foremost among the several authors, of modern civilization. But can it be imagined, that she passed altogether scathless through the fiery trial? The very remarks which have been made upon her strength, grandeur, and social influence, carry with them an assurance to the contrary. It would be idle to assert, that the Church exercised an unmixed, or anything like an unmixed influence for good, even at this early period of its relation with the secular society. To do this, is not given to any society composed of human agents, even under conditions most favourable to its perfection. But in a time of stormy passions and weak laws, of extreme perils on the one part, and strong temptations on the other, it is as certain as any proposition regarding human nature can be, that even in an institution supported by divine sanctions, and, in the main, accomplishing the work of God in the world, the human element will sometimes appear to preponderate, and will render itself conspicuous by outbreaks of violence or fraud. The general progress of affairs in the West of Europe, at least in that portion of it where the future of the modern world was most manifestly forming itself into its destined shape, was, notwithstanding all we have seen to the contrary, some-

times very unfavourable to the relations of the Church to the civil community, and to the character of the Church itself. The cruel and incessant wars, produced by the mutual jealousy of race and class, the personal quarrels of powerful men, and, especially, the great Austrasian and Neustrian schism between the members of the conquering and dominant people, were doubtless alleviated by such authority and influence as the ecclesiastical body possessed. By their frequent censure of rapine and violence, by their institution of days of worship and festival, when belligerents ceased from bloodshed, and the poor reposed from toil, by their assertion of the right of sanctuary for holy places, by the royal protection which they obtained for the serfs of the Church, in a word, by their general sympathy with suffering and oppression, the Christian clergy leavened the Merovingian era with the principles of mercy and justice, and prevented it from becoming a Pandemonium upon earth. But it was impossible that any body of men so intimately mixed up with mundane interests, should continue entirely uncontaminated by their contact. In those troubled times, the battle between the various combatants was frequently for very existence; and under these circumstances, it was natural, that any aid, moral or material, should be warmly welcomed by either party. Even a moral force like that of the Church was frequently compelled into the contest by the importunate entreaties of friends or supplicants, or the implacable attacks of enemies. So it came to pass, that the power exercised by the Church, notwithstanding its nature, became a large element in the unceasing strife which was always going on among the members of the Frank aristocracy, and was, more or less, directly the cause of its most furious outbreaks. It was an object of jealousy, and therefore, in that age of the sword, an object of attack, to proud and ferocious nobles incapable of controlling their passions, and determined at any cost to work their will. It

was but a natural consequence of the position, that the Church, too feeble to stand alone, should cast herself for protection into the arms of one or other of the powerful parties who contested the supremacy. Thus she attached herself to the Austrasian, rather than to the Neustrian party amongst the nobles, and to the Carlovingians, when they came into positive collision with the Merovingian dynasty. In both cases, it was her support which secured success. The bishops favoured the Austrasians, because they found them, owing to their inferior cultivation, a material more easy to work upon, or because they discerned their superior military strength, and divined their future victory. The Austrasians, on their part, were not ignorant of the moral aid which they derived from the support of the clergy, and they repaid it, by extending to them very valuable protection. What were the general relations of the great churchmen to the barbarian kings, may be gathered from the succinct account of M. Guizot. "The bishops," he says, "were the natural chiefs of the towns; they governed the people in the interior of each city, they represented them in the presence of the barbarians, they were their magistrates within and their protectors without. The clergy were, therefore, deeply rooted in the municipal system, that is to say, in all that remained of Roman society. And they very soon struck root in other directions. The bishops became the councillors of the barbarous kings; they counselled them upon the conduct which they ought to observe towards the vanquished people, upon the course they ought to take, in order to become the heirs of the Roman emperors. They had far more experience and political intelligence than the barbarians who came fresh from Germany; they had the love of power; they had been accustomed to serve and to profit by it." *

These intimate relations, then, naturally brought about a connection between the two parties which could not be

* Guizot, History of Civilization in France, Lect. viii.

altogether innocent for the Church, since it almost necessitated a partnership in crime. In all the cruel and violent dealing which culminated in the atrocious murder of Brunhilda, the Church must have been to a certain extent involved: the clergy could not altogether keep their hands clean, when the hands of their political associates were daily stained with bloodshed and rapine. To this must be ascribed the servility of the ecclesiastical chroniclers to the Frank kings. It is, indeed, something more than servility, for they occasionally use language which implies a culpable complicity in crimes that admit of no extenuation or excuse. The Frank rulers may have been robbers, murderers, and adulterers; but so long as they persecuted the Arians or defended the Church, they might be assured of being handed down to posterity as monarchs of "glorious, pious, and immortal memory." Nothing is more painful in the annals of these times than the strange obliquity of moral judgment, the entire self-deception, for we cannot believe it to be anything else, with which a worthy and well-conducted churchman like Gregory of Tours, regards the bloodstained and guilty lives of the Merovingians, provided only they proved themselves patrons and faithful champions of the Church. We have already quoted his language with respect to Clovis and Clotaire, and it is therefore unnecessary to repeat it here. But the truly marvellous part of the matter is, that Gregory has himself recorded the crimes of the man concerning whom he speaks in such gentle and considerate terms: it is from Gregory we learn that he burnt alive a Breton noble with his wife and daughters; that he murdered his brother's children; that he mastered by violence the persons of queens whose husbands he had slain by the sword; that finally, he put to death his own son, and extended the same vengeance to his children.

The protection of the Merovingian house brought with it even more positive evils than a general influx of the secular

spirit and worldly interests and aims. In early days the right of appointment to the episcopal office rested "cum clero et populo," with the clergy themselves and the congregation. The voice of his future people confirmed the new bishop in his office, if it did not force the office upon him, as in the case of Ambrose at Milan and Martin of Tours. But the Church paid for the support of the Merovingians by the sacrifice of her independence. This was the case from the very origin of the connection. Clovis was not the man to brook the serious interference of any authority with his own. He was willing to become a Christian and a churchman, but upon condition of being master of the Church in somewhat the same way as he was master of his people and kingdom. He assumed, therefore, at once the right of nomination to the vacant sees—how far upon the grounds of Byzantine precedent it is impossible to say,—and his successors maintained it. The Church recalcitrated, but the yoke was not to be shaken off. The Merovingians insisted upon the right, and exercised it as they chose,—sometimes in favour of the most disreputable priest or most unsuitable layman. "We don't come to you," said the clergy of Tours to one Cato, "in order to offer you the bishopric because we want you for our bishop, but because the king commands it."* The same writer informs us that, as well as the right of installation, the king exercised the much more equivocal and mischievous right of deposition from a see, when caprice or the interest of a favourite demanded it. This was to place the bishopric in the same position as the lowest *beneficia* of the crown; and the tendency of the whole was to secularize in their character the highest offices of the Church, and to injure proportionately its spiritual usefulness.

If we carry our view a little further, we shall see that, from their connection with the Austrasian party was brought about

* Greg. of Tours, iv. 11.

the connection of the clergy with the house of Heristal. The favour of the Church in the person of Pepin ratified and consecrated, if it did not altogether effect, the triumph of the Carlovingians. Yet the support of the Church was not granted, as we have already seen, without hesitation and difficulty. Had it not been for Lombard ambition, and the imminent peril of the papacy, it might never have been obtained. The interests of Italy for the time outweighed the principle of legitimacy in Gaul. There the Merovingian rule, strong in the traditions of centuries, was deeply seated in the affections of the simple people, and the fact of its established authority pressed heavily upon the consciences of the clergy. It required the personal intervention of Peter's successor himself to sanction the act of spoliation, and to dissipate those ideas of divine right which since that time Peter's successor has so laboriously endeavoured to re-constitute. Doubtless some of the difficulties of the Church and court of Rome in after-days may be regarded as a retribution for its conduct in this matter. Yet for the time it seemed

> "That the assassination
> Had trammelled up the consequence, and caught
> With its success surcease."

No attempt was made to retrace what was felt to be an irrevocable step. The people seem, without a murmur, to have accepted the accomplished fact; and the Carlovingians entered into such intimate relations with the body to which they owed their security and success, that henceforth its position with respect to the civil society was materially altered, and not altered altogether for the best. It is indeed true, as we have already asserted, that all through the Merovingian period the Church was closely connected with the monarchy, especially in respect of the appointment to bishoprics. It had grown into power upon royal patronage, had enormously increased its resources, and sometimes given

or received hard blows in contest with an unorthodox prince or aspiring noble. But the advent of the Carlovingians to the throne, while establishing a strong and settled government, mainly upon the sanctions afforded by the Church, gave to the ecclesiastical power a solidity, elevation, and permanence which rather resembled its position under Constantine than its dubious authority under the savage or feeble successors of Clovis. The Church legitimized Pepin, and Pepin established the Church. He confirmed the privileges of the clergy, some of which had fallen into abeyance during the troubled times through which the country had just passed: he restored the property confiscated by his unscrupulous predecessor Charles Martel, and he elevated the character of the clergy, which had been somewhat deteriorated by the admission of persons of the lowest class into the sacred order. Henceforth identified in interest and policy with the ruling dynasty, the orthodox Church, in the persons of its rulers, despite some natural jealousies, some few rebuffs and discouragements, and perhaps some severe shocks to its moral sense, rose with the fortunes of the Carlovingian race, until these fortunes expanded into universal empire. Charlemagne did not break with the traditions of his ancestors, he bestowed wealth in abundance and especial favour upon the ecclesiastics, who were by this time organized into a compact and well-defined body; and he secured to the great dignitaries privileges and immunities, and a secular dignity too easily abused. The single aim of his maturer life—so far as any man can be said to act from a single aim—was the reconstruction of the Western Empire in the person of himself and his descendants. So far as the action of the Church could be kept in subservience to this aim, he was a zealous patron of the clergy, and a promoter of their interests. But if he went thus far, he did not go further. He had no notion of that childish surrender of the rights and responsibilities of royalty which was forced,

in after-times, upon monarchs of weaker intellect by pontiffs more powerful and more aspiring than the occupants of Peter's seat with whom he had to deal. Still, he was considerate, and even too indulgent, within the limits which he prescribed to the action of Church authority. He confirmed to the Church the guarantees which it had already acquired in favour of the serf class; he abandoned to them, in their "beneficia," many of the duties and rights generally exercised in settled governments by the State; he gave the bishops something very like inquisitorial power, and permitted them to pursue criminals within the limit of their dioceses. Finally, he may be said to have settled the parochial system, whose first establishment dates from Justinian; and, by granting to the clergy the tithes originally paid to the Empire, he secured for them a sort of political position and power, which they have ever since more or less retained. The payment of tenths was a secular payment to the officials of the Empire. We have already seen how the officers of the Church succeeded to many of their functions, and how they came to stand altogether in their place. This change in the disposition of the funds hitherto paid to the civil society they justified upon the principles of the Levitical law. Charlemagne saw and acknowledged the justice of the scriptural rule, that those who minister to the altar should live by the altar; and he acquiesced in a claim which reposed upon such a rational basis. He is, however, said to have insisted on a tripartite division;—one for the bishop and clergy, a second for the poor, and a third for the maintenance of the actual fabric. The Church knew how to canonize and confirm the grant; and thus that which was at its institution a reasonable provision, or an obvious analogy, grew up into a sacred and inalienable right, forming now, perhaps, the most ancient title to the tenure of property in the existing systems of European law.

The effect, however, upon the clergy themselves of this

half-secular position, this participation in authority and place, and this large share in the secular business of the kingdoms of the world, became only too visible when the great emperor departed from the tumultuous conflict of men and interests which his power and presence alone had been able to control. The Prince-bishops of after-times, invested with all the most offensive attributes of temporal tyranny, and riding into battle harnessed like men-at-arms, do not perhaps imply a degree of disorder and corruption in the Church disproportioned to the disorder and corruption which existed in the civil society around it, yet they offer a very painful contradiction to the first principles of the religion of Christ, and were without doubt the legitimate outgrowth of what the episcopal office had been made by Charlemagne and the previous Carlovingian kings.

The evil effects of large wealth and luxury are not to be separated from the evils produced by too intimate relations with the secular power, and participation in its management of civil affairs. We only point to the second in their direct connection with the first. The favourable period which elapsed between the exaltation of the Church by Constantine and the actual collapse of the Western empire, had been actively employed by the clergy in the promotion of their temporal interests. The whole tenor of circumstances favoured their advancement to wealth, place, and power, and to these, therefore, they largely and successfully aspired. The privileges attached by the imperial policy to their order; the sanctity conceded to their persons; the separate jurisdiction, both civil and criminal, which they had managed to establish for themselves; the favour of the court, and the influence which they exercised as councillors upon political matters; the still more general and subtle influence which, as men of education and reputed piety, they exercised upon the masses,—all these things contributed to render the clerical office so attractive to the wretched citizens of the

falling Empire, that all men evinced a disposition to adopt it. As early as the time of Constantine, it was necessary for the emperor to prohibit, by a special law, the absorption of the majority of his subjects into holy orders.* The operation of the same causes increased proportionately with the decay of the civil power. At the period when Gaul finally succumbed to the barbarians, the Gallican church was not only opulent from her realized wealth and landed property, but from her enormous influence over all those who had property of their own. The inroad of Teutonic Paganism for a moment menaced the future fortunes of the Church. It seemed that her wealth and influence were about to pass away. But there were many points of secret sympathy between the reverential spirit which inspired the German superstitions, and the doctrines which the Catholic Church proclaimed to their rude adherents. This, added to the other causes already described, gave her the victory which she rapidly won over the invaders, and the conversion of Clovis not only assured to her victory in northern France, but also brought in its train a permanent triumph over the rival form of faith established in the Visigoth and Burgundian kingdoms. The policy pursued by Clovis was the model upon which the policy of his successors was based. Clovis was munificent towards churchmen, for churchmen were his most efficient allies in his difficulties and enterprises. The Merovingian monarchs inherited the same difficulties, and were for the most part inspired by the same ambition, and subject to the same superstitious alarms. Like Clovis, therefore, they heaped wealth and honour upon the Church to an almost incredible degree. The same motives acted upon private individuals, and induced them to shower costly offerings on the Church; and the Church, it must be admitted, well knew how to stimulate the generosity of its friends or penitents by effective appeals to their hopes

* Cod. Theod. xv. 2, 3.

and fears, by fervid pictures of future blessedness or future tortures in the fangs of the eternal fire. Charlemagne himself, one of the most orthodox of monarchs in an honest cause, asks with some bitterness, "whether that man can be considered to have given up the world for the sake of doing God service, who strives every day to swell his possessions by all means in his power,—with persuasions respecting the happiness of heaven, or menaces of the eternal punishment of hell; imposing, in the name of God or some saint, upon rich and poor alike, so that the ignorant or imprudent disinherit their proper heirs, and these heirs are forced by poverty and destitution into robbery and all sorts of crimes." He goes on to complain of the dishonest practice of bribing witnesses to commit perjury in testamentary suits, and of hawking about relics from place to place, for the purpose of making money out of them for church-building and similar purposes.*

This Capitulary is of itself sufficient to show that the wealth of the clergy was not always acquired with very clean hands, and it also indicates the sources from which it was mainly derived. Testamentary dispositions, extorted by cajolery or terror, against which the rude intelligence of the age was not proof; the sale of bones or relics of the bodies of the saints ("ossa et reliquias sanctorum corporum"), of which the supply was always kept equal to the demand, and sometimes by very unscrupulous expedients; the acquisition of estates, surrendered with the sole reservation of a life interest for the owners, and a sort of consecration of property to the shrine of some saint, closely resembling the Jewish system of Corban, which preserved the property thus made over inviolate from the rapacity of power or the accidents of plunder,—these were the principal sources from which arose

* The text of this portion of the Capitulary (anno 811) may be seen in a note in Perry's Franks. I have certainly not exaggerated in translation, any of the charges.

the enormous wealth of the Gallican church. To all this must be added, that the celibacy of the clergy consecrated and confined all these possessions to their own order. It was indeed possible for property to be left away from the Church, but the fact was almost unexampled. The abbot or bishop, almost as a general rule, bestowed his personalities on his successor: the accumulations of his life went to enrich the cathedral or monastery over which he had presided. Thus it came to pass that the Church, like a vast reservoir, receiving property from a thousand channels and parting with it in none, became filled to overflowing with the spoils of the kingdoms of the world.

When all circumstances are taken into consideration, we shall have little reason to question the assertion of Montesquieu, "Le clergé recevoit tant, qu'il faut que dans les trois races on lui a donné plusieurs fois tous les biens du royaume."* The possession of large wealth in human societies implies the practice of elaborate luxury, and luxury cannot be long practised without bringing sensuality and corruption into its train; and thus the social position of churchmen only too powerfully contributed to plunge them into those evils which, as we have just remarked, culminated in the lives of the prince bishops of feudal times.

Another circumstance, less noticed perhaps than those upon which we have dwelt, had no small effect upon the simplicity of life and manners which marked the clergy of the earlier barbarian epoch. It was the Benedictine order, as we have seen, which conserved the elements of civilization for those rude times. But the poor Benedictine brother, though the instructor of the serf or barbarian in agriculture and the common arts of life, had small pretension originally to the character of a man of letters. His uninstructed eloquence acted upon the minds of his hearers, and he was successful as a preacher and teacher, probably because his

* Esprit des Lois, xxxi. 10.

language and imagery differed little from their own. He had the success which a converted tinker or a shoemaker so often attains among persons of his own class—a success not to be spoken of with contempt by Englishmen, who know the effect produced among their countrymen by the half-inspired utterances of the poor tinker lying in Bedford gaol. But this must not make us forget that the Benedictine was not at first what he afterwards became. In the wild days of Childebert and Clovis, the monk might have been seen in his simple russet robe labouring in the field beside the peasant, or in his workshop with the artisan, and discoursing with them in familiar language on the marvels of some saintly legend. But when the wild days of Childebert and Clovis passed away, the monastery was honoured and secured under the protection of the strong right hand of the house of Heristal. In the Carlovingian period, literature, which had nearly died out during the long winter of the preceding centuries, began once more to put forth its shoots. Its influence soon became manifest amongst the clergy. A more refined and courtly phraseology assumes the place of the unpolished language which was sufficient for the ruder uses of Merovingian times. Simplicity, and perhaps utility, were sacrificed to the graces of style, and the larger range of knowledge resulting from intellectual culture, required more diversified illustration, and more elaborate expression in words. Leisure and more elevated social position brought with them their natural effects. Higher tastes were awakened, greater excellence attained, more ambitious aims pursued. The Benedictines had been the husbandmen, the shepherds, the artificers of the land; they became its artists, musicians, students, editors; they laid the first foundation of such scientific attainments as the Middle Ages possessed; they preserved ancient literature, and created mediæval art. What is true of the Benedictines in particular, is true of the clergy generally, though in

a less degree. Charlemagne employed them in those great educational designs which elevate the man so much above his age, and he so employed them that their duties, of necessity, reacted on themselves. As instructors, they were forced to become instructed; and some amusing stories are told of the energy with which "the rough, tough, and shaggy old monarch" hunted down all literary hypocrisy among his schoolmasters, and compelled them to fulfil their educational functions without subterfuge or pretence.

Yet all was not mere gain. The able and learned author of the History of the Industrial Classes in France has remarked, that the social progress of these classes, at this particular era, by no means kept pace with that of their superiors. One reason of the difference between the two is to be found in the fact that manual labour was abandoned not only by the secular clergy but by the majority of the monks, who left to lay brothers or converts, as occupations unworthy of educated men, those toilsome pursuits in which formerly the Benedictine had led the way. The superior education of the clergy, moreover, even with respect to the interchange of thought and social communication, began to alienate them more and more from the serfs and workmen who spoke a language which deteriorated as rapidly as the Latin of the cloister improved. Henceforward, the preachers no longer exercised their former influence upon the masses; and this accounts for the fact, otherwise unintelligible, that the Church which had once been so gladly "heard by the common people" as its teacher and protector, when the evil days of feudalism arrived, exhibited such very imperfect sympathy for the degraded condition of the peasant and the serf. The Carlovingian period, therefore, presented one very different feature from its Merovingian predecessor. In the latter, the general intellectual level of the age was mainly raised by the social improvement of the industrial classes; in the former, these classes shared but little in the immense

advance which society was making in all branches of secular knowledge. The fact was unfortunate, for it rendered Feudalism possible, and retarded the advent of better principles of government for some centuries; unfortunate, that is to say, in the conventional sense which our imperfect judgment of the fitness of things attaches to the term—doubtless not unfortunate to an intelligence capable of comprehending the laws of that eternal order in accordance with which societies ripen, reach their maturity, and decay.

One special reason why ecclesiastical affairs took the turn they did, is not uninstructive. When we speak of the wealth, and power, and influence of the Church, we must be understood to mean, that these were vested in its chief officers, and in them alone. The great body of the lower clergy had probably as little to do with wealth, and the means of even self-government, as they generally have had. The high dignitaries of the Church, its abbots and bishops, kept up the external pomp and splendour of their position, in the same manner, and often to a far higher degree, than the most illustrious nobles of the realm. Their estates were larger, their wealth more readily available, their hereditary vassals more numerous, their equipages and trains more magnificent, than those of the great Neustrian and Austrasian peers, who were in attendance at the monarch's court. Doubtless, this was in a great measure a necessary, or, at any rate, a natural condition of the political circumstances of the age. When secular society was divided into seigneurs and serfs, it was not easy to prevent ecclesiastical society from being divided into something very like seigneurs and serfs also. The facts, which we have already with some minuteness described, sufficiently explain the reason why, upon their first contact with the barbarians, the leading churchmen stood out before their eyes, in a position of almost absolute authority. Other facts, which have equally passed under our notice, account for the motives which

induced the barbarian leaders to recognize this authority, and to aid in perpetuating it. Other circumstances in the constitution of the Church enabled the class who had acquired this supremacy, to maintain it exclusively for themselves, and to set at nought any attempt on the part of their brethren to share in or mitigate it. Of the two great agencies which, in modern times, modify absolutism in practice,—public opinion and resistance on the part of the aggrieved,—the former did not exist, for there were no means of creating or representing it, and the latter was entirely crushed by the nature of the despotism with which it had to deal. The prelates were masters of the inferior clergy, in things temporal as well as things spiritual. The bishop possessed entire power over their chances of advancement in the Church, over their properties and over their persons;—all were at his disposition. A bishop might degrade a disobedient priest from his office; might deprive him of the land in which, under any circumstances, he only held a life interest; might subject him to imprisonment and stripes; might inflict upon him blindness, and even more disgraceful mutilation. The bishop of Le Mans caused several of his clergy who had complained of him to the king, to be whipped, blinded, and treated with more than oriental cruelty. The original authority for these statements may be found in the work of a learned writer, who has been quoted several times in these pages, and who subjoins this important remark:—"In the hands of the bishop was the exclusive management of all church lands within his diocese; his acknowledged share of the entire income of his diocese was a lion's one; and of the surplus which remained after defraying the regular expenses, he was irresponsible master."*

It would have been a contradiction to all our experience of human nature, had not an authority so arbitrary

* Perry, Franks.

and oppressive provoked opposition. It *did* provoke opposition, sometimes so violent as to break out into open rebellion, and terminate in bloodshed. Gregory of Tours relates more than one instance of the sort. But it was universally futile, because based upon no admitted rights, and supported by no powerful arm. The rights of the clergy against the bishop, Mr. Perry* may well say, were few enough, when we find quoted as almost the only one, the right, sanctioned by the council of Tours,† of driving strange women from the household of a bishop, who had not "licentiam extraneas mulieres de frequentiâ habitationis ejicere;" and besides all this, we must remember that, with the bishops alone rested the right of ordination, and that, of course, they availed themselves of it to strengthen their own position. They repeated the sin of Jeroboam; "they made priests of the lowest of the people," and filled their dioceses with creatures of their own, who, they knew, would be subservient ministers of their will. It was in vain to look for redress to the royal authority, for the bishops themselves were for the most part creatures of the royal authority, and it was for the interest of both parties alike to keep down the development of anything like a democratic element in Church or State.

When, then, all these things are considered, it is evident that there is a darker side to the picture of the early Western church, as well as that brighter one on which we have been delighted to dwell. If the equity of history demands that we should strike a balance between the good and the evil of this, as of all other institutions, against the good which has been stated in the language of M. Guizot, we may place the conclusion of Mr. Perry, who has, however, elsewhere most candidly admitted all that is to be said on the opposite side. "We cannot wonder, under these circumstances, that the office of bishop was filled by persons utterly unfit in cha-

* Franks, p. 476, note. † Greg. of Tours, vi. 11, 36; x. 15.

racter and habits to minister to the religious wants of the community. As early as the seventh century, in fact, the Franco-Gallican Church, if we are to judge of it from its highest dignitaries, would seem to have almost entirely lost the character of a religious institution, and to have existed chiefly to enable a few great spiritual lords to live in the greatest splendour, and to engage, with vast influence and almost boundless means, in the political feuds by which the country was distracted." *

To this we will only add two qualifications. Something must be allowed for the political necessities of the times. On all sides the struggle was for actual existence. No power could subsist as a power without abundant resources, and formidable means of aggression and defence. If the prelates meant to maintain their order as an existing institution of the state, they needed lands, wealth, and even arms, simply for self-defence. No one will accuse Michelet of an exaggerated preference for the Church, or of any favouritism as a writer towards its members; therefore his testimony is more unexceptional than our own could be, and he says—"Both as an asylum and as a school the Church needed wealth. In order to be listened to by the nobles, it was essential that the bishops should address them as their equals. In order to raise the barbarians to her own level, the Church had to become herself material and barbarous: to win over these men of flesh, she had to become fleshly." †

Again, in speaking of the Church as a society, we must not altogether identify it with the men whose names rise to the surface in the pages of history. In geological convulsion, it is the hardest material which crops up; the whirlpool forces the scum and the foreign substances to the surface of the waves. So in social convulsions, the men of hardest character force their way to the summit of affairs;

* The Franks, p. 479. † History of France, book ii. ch. 1.

those who are most visible in the working of an institution are often the most alien from its inner spirit, and the mass of the elements of which it is composed. The case is the same with the Christian Church. If at any particular era she throws out to view men of turbulent, grasping, and worldly minds, it does not follow that in the great undercurrent of her spiritual life there is not to be found, in large predominance, the pure elements of her natural character—piety, love, earnestness, labour, and self-sacrifice. Notoriety is not a necessary proof of excellence, neither are the notorious men of a society any sufficient sample of its inner nature and most common attributes. At any rate, in the Christian Society no such test can for a moment be admitted. It is necessary, without doubt, that some of its members should stand in high places and assume large proportions in the eyes of the world. It is worse than idle for the laity to demand of its great officers the primitive simplicity of Galilean fishermen, until the laity themselves re-assume the equally primitive condition of the crowds who went forth to listen to the preaching of the Baptist among the reeds of Jordan, and to whom it was an important object to receive loaves and fishes for their food in the waste places of Judea. No rational man will condemn the existence of a certain amount of power and splendour in the Romano-Gallic Church; but he must not allow this power and splendour altogether to avert his gaze from the men who trod humbly in her more quiet paths; the men who in every Church form the main element of its strength, and the real source of its practical usefulness; the men who hereafter, when honours are distributed in accordance with a judgment which externals cannot deceive, may be proved to have been the real heroes and benefactors of their age. That there were many such in the Church of Gaul is proved even by the very fact of her continued existence. The salt had not altogether lost its savour, or how should the whole mass have been pre-

served from corruption? The writer, whose severe censure has been recorded above, has himself elsewhere declared,—"We have good reason to believe, that, amidst the too general corruption of these times, there were always some in whose hearts the life-blood of the Church was treasured and preserved." *

I do not know that a better illustration of what is meant can be given than the brief sketch of a fifth-century bishop and his flock, which, like our other sketches of the same age, will be borrowed from the pages of Sidonius. This time, however, the worthy bishop forms a prominent figure in his own picture. The portraiture is the more interesting because it illustrates a matter which has induced two distinguished Frenchmen to reproduce the scene in their writings. It has seemed to them that it satisfactorily proves the thoroughly Pagan tone of feeling which was still underlying all Christian habits of thought, even the minds of distinguished churchmen. And doubtless this was characteristic of an age which separated and shared two civilizations. Literature was, indeed, touched by the morning twilight of the day which was already climbing above the horizon of European intellect, but there mingled with it still the dim shadows and distorted imagery of the night that had not passed altogether away. The Muses, Apollo, Diana, and the deities of the old Mythology, with the whole train of associations which their names suggest, were the ordinary stock-in-trade of such literature as the age possessed, even though it rested in the hands of churchmen alone. It was long before poetry acknowledged any other source of inspiration, and we may doubt whether Sidonius in Auvergne,

* Yet it must be admitted that this power and splendour sometimes has assumed shapes as much calculated as possible to suggest secular associations, and put out of sight, as much as possible, the distinction between the Church and the kingdoms of the world. Why, for instance, should those with whom the ordering of such things rested, have imposed upon posterity the exact attributes of Dives—"his purple and fine linen"—as the appropriate symbols of Episcopal power?

Ausonius in Bordeaux, and Synesius in Africa, were more truly Pagan in sentiment and language than the wits and courtiers who frequented at Versailles those very Pagan-looking *salons* of His Most Christian Majesty Louis XIV. In respect to Sidonius, at any rate, we shall attempt to show that he was far more sensitively alive to the religious responsibilities of his position than M. Guizot or M. Châsles is inclined to believe.

"The mixture of rhetoric and religion," says M. Guizot, in speaking of another production by Sidonius, "these literary puerilities amid the most animated scenes of real life, this confusion of the *bel esprit* and the bishop, make this singular society better known than all the dissertations in the world."* Let us therefore endeavour to depict a scene from it, not yet familiar to English readers.

The time is about the latter part of the fifth century—the scene the pleasant land of Auvergne. It is an early autumnal morning: on all sides are seen groups of peasantry bending their steps towards the Basilica of the little city, an edifice which had been converted from its ancient uses into a Christian church. Though the sun has not yet risen, the building is crowded with devout worshippers, and fresh numbers are continually arriving. In the portico, in the crypt beside the tomb of the holy martyr St. Just, are seen kneeling forms. The tones of the chant sung by the responsive voices of monks and clergy mingle sweetly with the fresh morning air. The bishop and some of the leading men of the city, who had been almost stifled by the atmosphere of the interior of the church, and dazzled by the glare of its numerous lamps, retire for a while, and seat themselves upon a grassy mound which encircles the tomb of the Roman consul Syagrius. Inhaling the soft perfumed breeze, doubly welcome after the oppressive heat, they give themselves up to the "abandon" of the hour, and to delightful familiar

* History of Civilization in France.

converse, undisturbed by the melancholy politics of the time. Not a word of the "Powers that be," or of exactions and tributes; not a word on that still more fearful topic, the coming of the barbarians. The conversation becomes animated. Witticisms circulate freely, good stories are told, and at last ecclesiastical solemnity is forgotten. The bishop calls for his raquette, and engages in a game at tennis. His brother prefers dice, and good-humouredly blows on his dice-box like a trumpet, to challenge his adversaries. The attendants on the church service crowd around, and enjoy with infinite zest the amusements of their superiors. Among the tennis-players was an old gentleman of some literary reputation, who rejoiced in the learned appellation of Philimathius. He was an enthusiastic player; but having unfortunately passed his "première jeunesse," and being somewhat obese in figure, the violent exercise of the game made him, like Hamlet—"fat and scant of breath."

His frequent tumbles, his pantings, his profuse perspiration, and the severe punishment he received from the ball, excited the commiseration of the worthy bishop, who made some excuse for securing to his friend an honourable retreat. The energetic old man retired from the game, and sitting down upon a bench before the porter's lodge, wiped his brow with the rough horse-towel which hung on a roller before the door. "Come," said he to the bishop, "improvise for us one of your epigrams."—"On what subject?" asked the bishop. "On my napkin," replied the old gentleman, "and I should like to have my name inserted if possible." The improvisator assured him that even this might be done. "Set to work, then, at once—my amanuensis is ready."—"We are in the middle of a crowd," remonstrated Sidonius, "and the Muses love solitude."—"You sly fellow," returned his friend, "you want a *tête-à-tête* and a private flirtation with the ladies. Arn't you afraid that Apollo will be jealous?" Sidonius was instantly ready with his

epigram. It is a pity that the English reader should be deprived of this exquisite *morceau*, which formed the prelude to a solemn church service of the fifth century. It runs somehow thus:—

> "At early morn, and when the bath requires,
> When from the chase his heated brow perspires,
> May Philomath this thirsty napkin seek,
> To drink the moisture from his dainty cheek."*

After this little interruption the congregation again crowd into the church, the mass is solemnized with unusual fervour, and in conclusion an excellent discourse is delivered by the episcopal improvisator. "Voilà le dialogue des deux Gaulois," says M. Châsles, "l'un évêque, l'autre homme grave et vieillard, tous deux Chrétiens." "Sidonius was then bishop!" writes M. Guizot, "and, doubtless, many of those who participated with him in the celebration of divine service, at the game of tennis, in the chanting of the psalms, and in the taste for trifling verses, were bishops like him!"† And yet how unjust would be any general inference as to the levity of the leading churchmen of the century, is proved by the fact, that these men were contemporaries of Jerome, and Jerome of all men still retaining their reason, offers the strongest example of religious exaltation, and the abnegation of all human interests and affections. While these bishops of Gaul were conversing with the national cheerfulness, and writing epigrams, though the sword was already suspended over their heads, he was filling the ears of all men with "lamentation and mourning and woe," and painting the aspect of what he believed to be a dying world, in the lurid light of his own despair. But we should not only be

* I append the original:—

> "Mane novo seu cùm ferventia balnea poscunt,
> Seu cùm venatu frons calefacta madet,
> Hoc foveat pulcher faciem Philimathius udam,
> Migret ut in bibulum vellus ab ore liquor."

† Guizot, Civilization in France, Lect. iii.

unjust to the episcopal order in general, we should be unjust to Sidonius himself, if we assumed upon these grounds his "semi-paganism," levity, or unfitness for his office. I have been struck during a somewhat careful study of his works by the humility, the strong sense of responsibility, and yet the entire trust in his Divine Master, which his private correspondence exhibits. One instance is all that I can give. "If you are well, it is indeed well. But I, weighed down with the burden of an unhappy conscience, was lately brought to the very verge of the grave by a violent fever. And it was natural that it should be so, so great is the burden of the function which has been imposed upon me, most unworthy as I am—upon me, unhappy man, who am forced to teach before I myself have learnt, who presume to preach what is right before I practise it, and like a barren tree, because I possess not works for fruit, scatter words like leaves."* Worthy sentiments, and surely not unsuited to teachers of the Gospel in our own Church and generation! They may at least preserve us from too rapid inductions concerning the religious state of other times and other men: they may, to recur to the object for which they have been introduced, prevent the injustice of utterly uncharitable judgments upon whole societies, and whole orders in those societies, founded upon the evils which the character of prominent individuals presents to our view.

The remarks that have hitherto been made relate directly, indeed, to the Romano-Gallic Church, and the circumstances which attended upon its connection with the barbarian invaders. But in their general principles they apply to the Churches of the West, wherever they came in contact with the new nationalities. The fortunes of these churches varied in different localities, more particularly in reference to their contest with the doctrines of Arius. These particulars, however, have been already narrated in connection

* Sid. Apollinaris, lib. v. epist. 3.

with the several countries where the collision took place.

Thus in Gaul, Arianism, introduced by the Burgundians and Visigoths, and established in their several kingdoms, received its death-blow from the conversion of Clovis to Catholic orthodoxy, and the invincible energy with which the early Frank leaders extended their empire and their faith to the Pyrenees.

In Spain, Arianism shared the same fate, under, as we have seen, still more remarkable circumstances. The almost universal attachment of the original population to the Latin form of doctrine, was exalted to the highest pitch by persecution, and asserted itself after the incorporation of the Catholic Suevi into the Gothic kingdom, in a manner so energetic that the Visigoth rulers found it politic to conform to the more popular dogma; and henceforward, until the Saracen invasion, Spain was the most orthodox, and most thoroughly priest-governed country of all those which had been formed from the fragments of the Roman Empire. We have seen something of the legislation which resulted from the fact, and have conceded enough to the Councils of Toledo to indicate our assent to Gibbon's candid admission that they surpassed in intelligence the government of the contemporary barbarians. But if the test of a good government be the conservation of itself and the country over which it is placed, the impotence of Spain, in presence of the Saracen invader, must surely make us hesitate before we apply to the semi-ecclesiastical constitution which brought it about, the enthusiastic language of M. Capefigue: "Le caractère religieux, épiscopal et régulier se trouve plus spécialement dans l'organisation de la monarchie des Visigoths, la plus belle, la plus impartiale, fondée sous l'influence des évêques."*

The situation of the clergy, originally perhaps resembling

* Vol. iv. ch. 27.

that which they occupied in the other German nationalities, such as we have already described it in Gaul, soon began to differ materially in the degree of civil power which they were enabled to exercise and maintain. The causes we have already stated; we shall not repeat them here. Enough has been said to show that the remarks which have been made in respect of Gaul, apply to Spain, with the understanding that in the latter country there was a much more complete absorption of the temporal into the spiritual element, and a much larger assertion, on the part of the clergy, of the prerogatives whose possession confers political power.

Africa was the real birth-place and home of orthodox Latin Christianity. There it took root; there its greatest and most influential teachers lived and taught, and not unfrequently suffered death. The Vandals brought over with them their national Arianism. Once more, then, the two forms of the faith were brought into contact and collision. If Arianism was to have her chance of supremacy, this appeared to be the opportunity. The military power and formidable character of its professors seemed likely to crush out Catholic Christianity from its very centre and stronghold—from the land of Cyprian, Tertullian, and Augustine. But the Vandals succumbed to the temptations of luxury, and Arianism succumbed to the temptations of persecution. We have already had to recount how these two fatal evils destroyed the empire of Genseric, and delivered over the African province to the arms of Belisarius and the doctrines of the orthodox faith. Arianism was expelled from Africa with the Vandals. The Church became subject to the Greek, as it had been subject to the Western emperors, and was finally extirpated by the fanatical followers of the Arabian prophet. Ever, therefore, owing allegiance to an imperial master whom she had no occasion to convert, or in subjection to a barbarian master whom she could not tame, the African church was very differently situated from those

of Spain and Gaul, and never acquired political powers, or entered extensively into the political organization of the land in which she was placed.

Into Italy, Arianism descended with Theodoric from the Alps; but it halted at Ravenna. Into the august Presence which sat on the Seven Hills, beside the tombs of the apostles, and clothed with the traditional glories of an imperial Past, the new dogma dared not venture yet. But in establishing itself at Ravenna, it also established a power which might have been developed into formidable proportions. It was under the auspices of Arian bishops that the famous Ostrogoth code was constructed upon the basis of the old Roman law. Ostrogoth legislation and government, as we have already recorded, deserves the highest commendation, and, had no disturbing causes been at work, it might have materially checked the temporal power of the Italian pontiffs. But it was a policy of toleration. Surrounded by so many enemies, Theodoric could not afford to neglect or ill-treat his Catholic subjects. When he was goaded into doing so, when his policy became one of persecution, Theodoric fell. Then ensued the conflict of his descendants with the Eastern emperor. Aided by the sympathies of the orthodox, the Greek generals Belisarius and Narses expelled the Ostrogoths from Italy. Totila, the most politic and glorious leader of the nation, discerning the cause of his weakness, renounced his religion, and embraced the Nicene dogma; but it was too late. With him perished, perhaps, the best chance ever afforded to Arianism of establishing itself as a political power.

But all chances were not over yet. Once more Arianism triumphed with the Lombards, but halted at Pavia, as it had previously halted at Ravenna. Lombard conquest soon absorbed all Italy except the Exarchate and the Eternal City itself; but with the Lombards, their religion never appears to have assumed a more important shape than that

of political partisanship. Their kings oscillated to and fro between the two faiths, as interest or occasion required. We hear, indeed, that Agiluph, under the influence of his wife Theodolinda, insisted upon a general conversion to orthodoxy among his subjects. To Theodolinda we owe the church of Monza, where the iron crown, the symbol of Lombard sovereignty, was offered to John the Baptist by "Agiluph, king of the Lombards by the divine grace;" and where Theodolinda herself dedicated to the same Saint a hen and seven eggs of gold, in remembrance of the seven provinces which formed the Lombard heptarchy. But Arianism again raised its head, and the two faiths were alternately accepted and rejected by the Lombard Gallios, who cared only for the cities of the Pentapolis and the success of the siege of Rome. Had their ambitious designs been realized, it is impossible to conjecture which faith would have triumphed; but in Italy all further controversy, confusion, and doubt was cut short by the orthodox battleaxe of Pepin-le-Bref and the coronation of Charlemagne.

One other country saw the contact between Christianity and a band of barbarian conquerors, and apparently with a more disastrous result to the latter than elsewhere. The Saxons who landed in Britain, either from their native ferocity, or from some peculiar circumstances attending the invasion, were the only race of Teutonic stock which altogether repudiated the religion found in their new country, and attempted its extirpation. It is impossible to determine the exact period when Christianity was introduced into the island. The mythical conversion of Lucius, and the canonization of Alban, a Roman, as his name implies, coupled with other more satisfactory evidence, prove that during the second and third centuries, a Christian church had gradually grown up in the Roman colony. But before this church could acquire political consistence, it was swept by the

Angles and Saxons into the fastnesses of Wales, the western islands of Scotland, or the still more secure refuge afforded by the Irish morasses. The next attempt at conversion was the famous expedition of Augustine, organized by Gregory the Great. It lies altogether out of our sphere to pursue its details, but it is important to notice, with respect to the relation of the Church to the civil society, that she, in this case, encountered the difficulties arising from a disputed message and a divided house. The British Church, holding to its traditions, derived in part from the East, would not submit to the supercilious strangers who regarded these traditions as an abomination. The consequence was much bitter language, and finally open rupture. The Latins had owed their introduction to a French princess, Bertha, wife of Ethelbert, the Saxon king. The Latins were, therefore, the court party, and naturally prevailed. But hardly had the conquest been achieved, when a new schism, partly, perhaps, reacting from the old one, divided the strength of the Church, and impaired its relation with what had now begun to be called the centre of Catholic unity. The quarrel between the native and foreign clergy, or what would in later times be called the rupture between the national and ultramontane party, produced a new aspect of church affairs in England, and prevented them from following the course which we have seen them pursue in Gaul. It is sufficient merely to point out the divergence and its causes. The more minute treatment of the subject has engaged a fellow-labourer in the historic field.*

One only observation it will be desirable to make. In Britain alone there was no such struggle with a rival form of faith, as we have recorded in Gaul, Spain, Italy, and Africa. No Saxon Arianism opposed the efforts of Augustine, though he had to contend against a more virulent spirit of Paganism than that which confronted the Christian

* White's History of England: Routledge and Co.

bishops who civilized the countries which we have named. These, then, — Paganism and the Arian heresy, — were the two great adversaries of Catholic Christianity. She conquered them both, not assuredly by the exercise of superior physical strength, perhaps not by the exercise of superior mental powers. It was because her spirit was more fully sympathetic with the inner life of humanity, more thoroughly pervading its whole nature, and more suited, so to speak, for assimilation into it. Paganism as the religion of sense, and Arianism as the religion of intellect, answered severally to the wants of the animal nature and the logical faculty. But both failed to satisfy the conditions required for universality and permanence, for they offered an imperfect counterpart to that microcosm of affections, feelings, thoughts, and wishes, which constitutes the moral nature of man. The sense of dependence which Schleiermacher dwells on as the root of our religious emotions, the craving for personal relations with the Power which holds our destinies in the hollow of His hand, could not be satisfied by the assertion of Divinities whose power reason distrusted, and against whose attributes conscience rebelled. Neither could they be satisfied by a Divinity which, appearing in the guise of an impersonal Unity, answered only to a part of their nature, though they were told, and may have believed, that it was the highest part. It is not difficult, at least for us, to understand how faith in an incongruous array of anthropomorphous idols, or even faith in what to the uneducated mind is always resolving itself into a logical abstraction, passed away in the day of trial before faith in a living personal God, Father and Ruler of men, and in Him,—

> "The Everlasting Word, who dwelt with God
> In the beginning, and Himself *was* God,
> Yet Son of Man, and Man, touch'd with the sense
> Of our infirmities, and, while with men,
> Known only by the words and deeds of love,

Blessing the bridal, weeping by the grave,
Moved by sad woman's penitential tears,
And sorrow's bitter cry, and childhood's smile,
And pain's engrossing anguish ; and at last
Uplifted on the Cross, to draw all hearts,
All aspirations, and all aims of men,
All thoughts and all affections to Himself,
And bind them in the bond of perfect love !"

These thoughts lead us naturally to the last topic on which we have engaged to remark. Why was it, when the barbarian nationalities had been matured, that the Christian Church, after the long process of combination with them, assumed the particular form in which we find her? Why do we see her government gradually growing into an ecclesiastical absolutism, nearly as complete for a time as the imperial absolutism to which she succeeded in the city of the Cæsars? Why, with capacities and opportunities which might have suggested and assured independence, do we find her submitting to the despotic rule of an individual which, though justified on spiritual grounds, exercised an arbitrary and irresponsible authority over temporal affairs?

The answer is twofold, partly resting upon the innate instincts of men, and partly upon the force of external circumstance. The Papacy succeeded, because the Papacy struck that chord in the human heart which Philosophies and philosophical Religions like that of Arius had always missed. She met that craving for a personal relation between the worshipper and the object of his worship which is so intangible when men declare the object of worship to be an essence or abstraction of any kind. Sooner or later, in their religious relations, Christians will turn to a fatherly government: their most deep-rooted instincts demand it: the principle is the very inner life of their faith. This fatherly government the Papacy supplied, or affected to supply, in a visible, material way; and the hearts of men turned towards it, as vegetation turns towards the great physical source of light, heat, and vitality. It is for the

theologian to explain how deep and dangerous a delusion lurks beneath the Papal experiment, if, after all, it prove a counterfeit; if there be a fatherly government already existing against which men rebel, and if they are encouraged in their rebellion by the presence of a fictitious representative which usurps its place. Our business is only to trace the connection between the mental and the historical phenomenon; between the idea and its practical development in men's lives and acts.

The concurring causes which aided this development and gave temporary success to the Papal theory of church government, thanks to our prolonged controversy with Rome, have been perhaps as completely discussed as any subject in our literature. I shall, therefore, attempt nothing more than a very cursory *résumé* of such among them as present themselves most vividly to my own mind. They are certainly not unimportant, because the more we can show that such supremacy was the natural and almost necessary outgrowth of circumstances, the more do we weaken the argument for direct Divine appointment from the existence of the supremacy as an established fact.

(1.) In the first place, then, Rome had been the political centre of the world. It was almost of necessity, therefore, that she became its religious centre. There was very much power in the mere traditions of the place. An indefinable reverence hung about it. It had been the old seat of Empire, of arts, and arms, and laws, as they were known in the West. It possessed easy communications with all civilized regions, and men for a thousand years had been accustomed to regard the *aureum millearium* in the Forum as the central point of this vast network which overspread the world. Both reverence and habit, therefore, directed men's minds to Rome as a local centre, irrespective of the authority of which it was to be the seat.

(2.) This authority had been the authority of the Cæsars;

that is to say, men's minds had been familiarized with Rome as the seat of an eminently monarchical and absolute power, which power rested in a person who was the supreme visible Head of the society, the fountain of law, honour, rewards, and punishments,—in short, the very essence of the system of government without which men could not conceive of it as a government at all. But to this position, as we have seen, the Church succeeded, when she adopted the statistical and geographical arrangements of the Empire as the platform for her own organization. In the ninth book of Bingham's great work will be found an account of the ecclesiastical divisions formed upon this principle, and "the original of these." The Church was no longer, if it had ever been, as Guizot asserts, a congregation of floating units connected by a common dogma. It was a society, with all the functions and attributes of a society: it had an outward form, an inherent judicial and administrative power, a graduated scale of dignity among its own members, relations with foreign bodies; the right to rule, reconcile, and combine which belongs to a sovereign power. The nations had only known one such power before, and with this they, as has been said above, indissolubly associated the idea of a supreme visible Head. When, therefore, they saw the Christian Church in possession of its deserted place, they could not conceive of her as a dominant authority without a visible Head also, which should be to metropolitans, bishops, and clergy, what the temporal Cæsar had been to the officers of provinces, dioceses, and parishes within the Empire.

(3.) It could not be doubted for a moment who this should be. The circumstances of the early Church required, both for the definition of doctrine and the maintenance of discipline, numerous meetings, synods, and councils. These also of necessity required in each case a president. Bishops, metropolitans, and patriarchs, associated in the ascending scale of their rank, fulfilled these offices on the occasions of their

occurrence, and naturally associated with their own persons, much of the authority belonging to the assemblage of which they were the mouthpiece and representative. The amount of this authority depended upon the importance of the locality and the rank of the president. No locality could vie in dignity and consideration with Rome: no officer surpassed in rank the Roman patriarch. When, therefore, differing or disputed decisions came to be compared, and their relative value assigned to each, it was natural that the traditions of Rome should confer upon her ecclesiastical chief somewhat of that pre-eminence which her secular rulers had so long enjoyed.

(4.) It was natural, had these traditions merely recalled the power and splendour of republican and imperial Rome; but by this time Christian Rome had acquired traditions of her own, appealing not less effectually to the sympathies of the faithful than her faded glories of earlier days. She was said to contain the sepulchres of two Apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, and they had been reverenced even by the unscrupulous rapacity of the barbarian. St. Peter, it was positively asserted, had himself personally founded the See, and transferred to its occupants the miraculous power of opening and closing the gates of heaven. There had been endured the bitterest persecutions; there the noblest triumphs had been won. The blood of martyrs had stained the pavement of her streets; the smoke of the flames in which they perished had defiled her roofs. It was a city of confessors and conquerors; the scene of that most marvellous triumph, which had given to the persecuted faith of the Catacombs the kingdoms of the world. Therefore sanctity attached to it in a Christian aspect, as sanctity had attached to it in a pagan aspect. The Church of the two Apostles was for the one society what the temple of Capitolian Jove had been for the other.

(5.) But Rome was also a centre for business and affairs, the centre, moreover, of a real intellectual supremacy. All

matters of importance, legal and administrative, had ever been transacted at Rome, and the business of the Church flowed in the same channel as the business of the Empire. Appeals for guidance from the perplexed, and protection from the weak, the decision of disputes personal or theological, the general privilege of arbitrament on questions where the churchman was bound, in his character as such, not to submit to heathen interference,—all these turned naturally, from the first, to such a centre, and increased, as they themselves increased, its moral weight and influence. Rome claimed, therefore, in process of time, as a right, those judicial and legislative functions which had originally been an accident of her position. The claim was perpetually received with protests; but none of the protesters were strong enough to make head against the metropolis, except the rival metropolis of the East, and her protest was practically made good. Constantinople never acknowledged the supremacy of Rome. It has also been said that Rome was the seat of a real supremacy of intellect. The one assertion implies the other. The capital necessarily, in every country, attracts to itself the men of genius and leading ability. The more centralized the government, the stronger the attraction: the assertion is more true of St. Petersburg or Paris than of London or New York. It was eminently true of Rome; for even that amount of rivalry which these cities may be supposed to exercise towards each other, until the departure of Constantine, was, in her case, utterly unknown. Even then the foundation of a new capital on the Bosphorus had little effect on the rude nationalities of the West. To this must be added the fact that the Christian Church, independently of its action upon the imperial jurisprudence, had by this time tribunals and a jurisprudence of her own, reposing upon opinion and the voluntary submission of its members; but not on that account less real or less effective. The central court of this half-recognized discipline or law

was necessarily at Rome. Thither, therefore, personally or by their representatives, flocked all whose object was to avail themselves of its provisions; and the bishop of Rome, as supreme arbiter in all such cases, attracted to himself the reverence which is universally directed to the fountain of law, order, and justice.

It is not, therefore, on the whole, any matter of marvel that Rome absorbed into herself the knowledge, ability, and experience in affairs to be found throughout the West. When both bishop and emperor resided as rival powers within her walls, these were naturally the two centres round which this intellectual activity was grouped. But the emperor passed away, the bishop remained, and there was no longer any disturbing cause to prevent its concentration round a single figure. The fact had some mischievous consequences; it made Rome the very hotbed and focus of religious controversy, the chosen battle-field—to borrow an expression from Dean Milman—of all the civil wars of Christianity. But the consequences no less prove the fact, and its influence was immense. All the great men of the new faith congregated to Rome, and the Christian world looked upon her as its Capital, until it came to regard her as its Queen.

(6.) We are thus reminded of one of those causes which Guizot declares to be most potential in social revolutions—the personal character of the great men who lead and govern the society. The influence of Jerome, of Ambrose, and of Augustine, moulded the character of the Papacy, gave to it a spiritual, and laid for it the firm foundations of temporal policy. Leo and Gregory did what remained to be done. It is not easy to overrate the influence exercised over his contemporaries by the heroic conduct of the first of these two men. All the world, and especially all the Christian world, looked with reverence and wonder upon that unarmed warrior, before whose fearless front the terrible Alaric and the still more terrible Attila and Genseric had recoiled. It is not

surprising that an imaginative but ignorant age should have succumbed to a power which proved itself mightier than the sword of men who had overrun and subdued the world. The prestige which Leo had gained for the pontifical office was employed to the uttermost, and augmented by Gregory the Great, who is by most writers regarded as the founder of the Papacy, — at least, the Papacy as it is known in modern times. The vague elements of an undefined power, — such as the first elements of a moral power invariably are,—he arrested by his marvellous genius and crystallized into substance, converting them into one solid and coherent body, upon which he impressed an immutable form. It is well said of him by Hallam, that in his hands all imperfect or disputed claims assumed a positive shape; and they were prosecuted with invariable success, until the first officer of the first office in the Christian world,—as we may well admit the bishop of the Western metropolis to have been,—towered up to the gigantic proportions of Vicar and Representative of Christ, and Spiritual Ruler of the Kingdoms of the World. The limits in such a case, between a spiritual and a temporal power, are very difficult to observe, even when there is an earnest desire for their observance. There was no such desire in the minds of Gregory or his successors, and assuredly the chances of confusion were materially increased, when the spiritual fathers of the Church were admitted into the fraternity of secular sovereigns by the dotation of Pepin-le-Bref. A larger sphere than ever was opened to the occupants of the pontifical throne, for the action of personal genius and ambition, and the most conspicuous example of the embodiment of these qualities, and of their political results, was afforded in atter-ages by Hildebrand, and his administration of the Holy Office.

(7.) Any enumeration of the concurring causes which gave power to the Papacy would be incomplete, if we failed to

notice the exceedingly favourable circumstances which accompanied its external relations with other powers, ecclesiastical or temporal. The legions of Titus disposed of its first and most formidable rival. Jerusalem, the natural centre of Christian unity, was swept away from the family of nations by the Roman sword, and was not originally even elevated to the rank of a patriarchate. The other patriarchates, of Antioch, Alexandria, and Constantinople, were too remote to interfere with Rome in her own peculiar sphere. The Saracens destroyed the power of the first two as completely as Titus destroyed all chances of rivalry from Palestine. Constantinople alone remained. Her opposition was of very trifling importance in the struggles which Rome had to maintain with the new nationalities around her; yet the opposition of Constantinople was not entirely ineffectual: it is to her we owe the fact that the Papacy was compelled to accept the title of Queen of the West in exchange for that of Queen of the World. Nor was the Papacy less fortunate in its relations to the civil powers with whom it was from time to time brought into contact. In the first place, the departure of Constantine and the Court left the bishop as the chief man in the capital; the highest in social as well as in ecclesiastical position. He discerned the favourable conditions by which he was surrounded, and ably availed himself of them. Even the invasion of the barbarians produced the same effect. In one sense Alaric may be said to have swept Rome with the besom of destruction, for the old Romans were found there no more. After that terrible visitation, none save the Christians had courage to return. To them, therefore, and to the masses who lacked the means to fly, was left the ancient mistress of the world. Henceforth she was Christian in every sense of the word, and reflected what remained of her ancient glory upon the Chief of the new people within her walls. She never afterwards lost the power and the prestige thus acquired. She

stood erect in the presence of the barbarian kings, who came, sword in hand, to demand entrance at her gates. She dismissed Attila and his Huns beyond the Alps. She arrested the Ostrogoth at Ravenna, and the Lombard at Pavia. When Attila was preparing for her destruction, his life was cut short by the dagger of one whom some have not hesitated to regard as the Jael or Judith of Latin Christianity. When Theodoric changed his policy, and thought himself in a position to menace the Church, a tempory gleam of prosperity enabled the Greek arms to drive his descendants from Italy, and, as a most unexpected and unwished for consequence, established on a solid basis the power of a rival and an adversary to the Patriarch of the East. The Lombards were more troublesome and dangerous neighbours than the Ostrogoths. But just when the Lombard thought his foot was on the neck of the Supreme Pontiff, and the sceptre of Italy within his grasp, a new Protector was raised up beyond the Alps, whose strong arm and generous spirit conferred upon the Church more of the realities of temporal power than she had hitherto enjoyed. Fortunate, indeed, was it for Rome that she had the Franks for friends, at an era when the slightest change in the confused and troubled relations of European politics might have converted them into enemies. Fortunate, too, was it for her that Charlemagne was rather inclined to accept her spiritual assistance than to distrust her temporal ambition. Had he, or another man of the same stamp, been living half a century later, the pretensions then for the first time put forward would have been crushed by a rude and heavy hand. As it was, the relations between the two powers were left indefinite and obscure. They are symbolized by the singular interchange of investiture between Adrian and Charlemagne. The theory seemed to be that the Pope should make the Emperor, and the Emperor should make the Pope. Charlemagne, as long as he lived, had no idea of foregoing his part

of the ceremonial; still less would he have tolerated entire independence; least of all would he have conceived possible a claim to universal supremacy. But the successors of the two men reversed their positions and their policy. No Nicholas II., no Hildebrand, sat upon the throne of the great man who had erected the empire of the West.

I am not writing a controversial paper upon the subject of the Papal supremacy. That has been often and ably done; and the results at which controversy has arrived, so far as it ever arrives at any results, are easily accessible. It is my humbler duty to record the impression produced upon the historian's mind by a consideration of the circumstances which accompanied its origin and its growth. I have endeavoured to do so with simplicity and fairness; and the general result appears to be this. It is ureasonable to deny the fact of a positive precedence attaching to the See of Rome from a very early period; and again, it is unreasonable to deny that the power which grew out of this precedence, was of immense value to Christendom, because in the stormy times accompanying its birth, it offered a central point of union to the young nationalities which had accepted the faith, and proved itself an efficient instrument to re-organize and conciliate the dislocated relations of a society which the passing away of an old and the coming of a new order of things had broken up. But, on the other hand, it is surely as unreasonable blindly to take the logical leap from a practical precedence to an absolute supremacy; or to assume that such a precedence, however just, reasonable, and useful in its generation, necessarily implies its own permanence, or the inalienable right attaching to a Divine appointment. A Divine appointment in one sense, indeed, it was—in the sense in which great men, nations, and national institutions; nay, even our own insignificant lives and fortunes are of Divine appointment; because they are the instruments of an over-ruling purpose;—instruments which arise, flourish,

fulfil their functions, and pass away. Like Feudality, like Chivalry, like the Crusading spirit, like the forms of Mediæval life, like the Fanaticism of the Covenant, the temporal power of the Papacy has had a great work to do upon the earth, which it cannot continue to do, if only for the reason that it has been done. Is it uncharitable to hope that the aspects of the time portend the advent of another great phase in the existence of Rome—a noble and a useful one? Divested by a mightier Power of those unspiritual attributes which she would never have voluntarily abandoned, and forced into a path in which she would never of herself have walked, by the kindly but inexorable pressure of that Hand which shapes the destinies of nations, may she one day take her stand among the Christian sisterhood of Churches, separated from those around her by no more exclusive partition-wall than the diversity in doctrine and speculative belief which are the inseparable accidents of Humanity, and which must continue to subsist among us, so long as the light of Divine truth is refracted through the gross atmosphere of a contaminated world.

> "Our little systems have their day,
> They have their day and cease to be;
> They are but broken lights of Thee;
> But Thou, O LORD, art more than they!"

CHRONOLOGICAL APPENDIX.

	B.C.
ASSASSINATION of Julius Cæsar	44
Munatius Plancus founds the famous colony of Lugdunum in Gaul	43
Philippi confirms the power of the Cæsarean party	42
Agrippa, anxious for the safety of Gaul, attacks the Germans beyond the Rhine	37
The Roman lieutenants combat the tribes of W. Alps—Octavius attacks Dalmatians and Pannonians	35
While Augustus visits Gaul on his progress, Tiberius and Drusus combat the Rhenish barbarians	15
Drusus attacks the Batavi, ravages the Sigambrian (Franks) territory, and returns to Rome	12
Drusus continues his invasion of Germany	11
Tiberius sent against Dalmatians—Drusus attacks Catti and other German tribes—the consecration at Lyons of the altar in honour of Augustus	10
Drusus pursues the Germans to the very banks of the Elbe—dies between Saale and Weser	9
Tiberius goes to Germany after death of Drusus—Pannonia subdued	8
	A.D.
Tiberius Cæsar sent against the German tribes, who are restless and threatening	4
Tiberius, who had been going against the Marcomanni, suppresses, after three years, the revolt in Germany	6
Pannonia subdued—war lingers in Dalmatia	8
The great disaster of Varus in the Teuto-burger Wald, near the Lippe	9
Tiberius goes to the German legions—Germanicus follows him there	10
Germanicus routs an immense concourse of Germans on the plains of Idistavisus, near the river Weser	16
Mauritania made a province	42
Claudius attempts the conquest of Britain, as the chief seat of Druidism	43
Claudius makes Thrace a Roman province	45
Revolt of the Batavi, near the embouchure of the Rhine, under Civilis—joined by Gaulish tribes under Sabinus	69

A D.

The Alani, an Asiatic tribe, greatly harass the Parthians, who demand a Roman leader 72

Agricola completes the subjugation of the Britons 85

The Dacians from north of Danube invade Mœsia—Domitian purchases peace 86

Huns divide into two branches; 1st remains N.E. of Sogdiana, 2nd comes westward 92

Trajan crosses the Danube from Mœsia into Dacia—attacks the king in his capital 101

Trajan builds a stone bridge over Danube in Dacia—leaves permanent traces of occupation 104

Displacement of the nations between Baltic and Danube—Marcomanni, Quadi, Sarmatæ, Roxolani, Iazyges, Vandals—advance by Pannonia nearly to Aquileia—repulsed with difficulty 168

The Marcomanni appear under Aquileia—repulsed by gladiators and slaves armed 172

The "Thundering Legion" employed against the Marcomanni.... 174

Marcus Aurelius dies at Sirmium, or Vindobona, while repelling the Marcomanni 180

First appearance of Franks on the frontier—defeated near Mayence by Aurelian 241

Decius first emperor who combats the Goths—they appear in Mœsia—Decius killed 251

The magnificent temple of Ephesus (which had been rebuilt) burnt down by the Goths 260

Gaul for twelve years under separate chiefs, independent of the Empire—recovered under Aurelian 261

Claudius II. (Gothicus) drives the Goths from Thrace, Asia Minor, and Greece 269

Aurelian allows the Goths to settle in Dacia—Trajan's conquest—the name of Dacia now given to part of Mœsia south of the Danube 271

The Alemanni penetrate into Italy as far as Umbria 273

Probus builds his famous wall of defence against the barbarians .. 276

Franks obtain from Probus settlements in Gaul 277

Insurrection in Gaul vigorously maintained by the peasants (Bagaudæ) against imposts 285

Franks have lands granted in Gaul for military service 291

A Gaul, Sylvanus, made emperor for three months—Julian (the Apostate) sent from the schools of Athens into Gaul as Cæsar—defends it against Franks 355

The emperor Julian permits Franks chased by the Quadi to settle in Brabant 358

The Huns, a barbarous nomad race of central Asia, impelled onwards to Europe and the West, driving other barbarians before them—overthrow Alani 374

A.D.

Goths, chased onward by the Huns, ask Valens for lands south of the Danube—left with their arms, owing to corruption of Roman officials—make use of them to avenge their ill-treatment 376

Bloody victory of Goths over Valens at Adrianople—begins the BARBARIAN INVASION 378

The orthodox Spaniard Theodosius made emperor 379

Maximus, at Bordeaux, condemns heretics to death—first blood shed by emperors for orthodoxy 384

The Frank Arbogastes, after killing Valentinian II., has disposal of the Empire 392

Theodosius last sole master of Empire—cessation of Olympic games—the Empire divided between sons of Theodosius; Honorius, W.; Arcadius, E. 394

Rufinus (a Gaul, minister of Arcadius, emperor of the East) brings in Alaric and Visigoths 395

Alaric and the Visigoths in central Greece and Peloponnesus, but surrounded by Stilicho's forces, and forced to retreat..... 396

Alaric defeated twice in Upper Italy by Stilicho, falls back upon Illyria 403

Passage of the Rhine by the Burgundians, Sueves, Vandals, &c., notwithstanding the opposition of the Ripuarian Franks—enter Italy—driven back by Stilicho 406

Sack of Rome by Alaric, because of refusal to pay tribute agreed to by Stilicho 409

Partition of Spain (in part) between Sueves and Vandals..... 411

Burgundians established in Gaul with consent of Roman emperor 413

Ataulf establishes the power of the Visigoths in Spain..... 414

Toulouse, the capital of the Visigoth empire—relations of Visigoths with Roman emperor Honorius, through Placidia, his sister—Visigoths extend their conquests in Spain 419

Theodoric I. 420

War between Rome and Visigoths—Aëtius..... 425

Invasion of Africa by Vandals—Boniface..... 429

Aëtius takes refuge in Pannonia, among the Huns..... 432

Vandals recognized in Africa by treaty with Roman emperor.... 435

Visigoths at war with Rome—Theodoric extends their limits 437

Vandals take Carthage, and establish Arianism—Visigoths defeat Romans and Huns at Toulouse—obtain Novempopulana from the emperor 439

Frank Merovius raised on the shield—Sueves acquire Bætica and Carthagena (imperial provinces) in Spain..... 448

Britons appeal for aid to Aëtius—Attila, king of Huns, concludes a peace with Greek emperor Theodosius, who had tried to get him assassinated 449

A.D.

Invasion of Gaul by Attila, and defeat at Orleans and Châlons by Aëtius and the barbarians already settled in Gaul 451

Huns in Italy take Aquileia—retire from before Rome at the entreaty of St. Leo, Pope—Emperor Valentinian pays tribute—foundation of Venice by fugitives 452

Death of Attila, and division of the Empire among his sons 453

Assassination of Aëtius by Valentinian III. 454

Genseric the Vandal invited into Italy by the widow of Valentinian III.—Rome sacked for fourteen days—empress carried off with her two sons 455

The Burgundians combining with Visigoths in Spain dreadfully defeat the Sueves—Ricimer the Sueve, kingmaker and imperial general in Italy..... 456

Invasion of Roman Gaul by Visigoths, to avenge Roman emperor Avitus 459

Unsuccessful attempt of Roman emperor Majorian against African Vandals..... 460

The Ostrogoth chief Theodoric sent hostage to Constantinople—educated six years there..... 461

Visigoths gain Narbonne by treason—advance up the Loire 462

When near to Orleans, they are driven back by Ægidius..... 463

The Salian Franks, for some time under Ægidius, place themselves under their chief Childeric, son of Merovius—part remain under Syagrius, son of Ægidius 464

Rome for the third time stormed by the barbarians (under Ricimer) 472

Rome for the fourth time stormed—Odoacer, chief of the Heruli and Rugæ, a Scythian tribe—the Heruli the first to settle in it—Augustus Romulus dethroned..... 476

Visigoths conquer all Spain, except Galicia (still Suevic)—Genseric dies 477

Visigoths make conquests in Gaul 480

Accession of Clovis at 16 481

The Ostrogoth Theodoric invited to Constantinople, and destined for the consulship 483

Franks extend their power over Gaul through the victories of Clovis over the Roman Syagrius at battle of Soissons..... 486

Ostrogoths and Theodoric directed upon Italy by Greek emperor—gain two victories over the troops of Odoacer, but shut up in Pavia 489

Theodoric saved by the aid of the Visigoths from southern Gaul—Odoacer retires to Ravenna 490

Clovis the Frank, pagan, marries Clotilda, a Catholic, niece of the Arian king of the Burgundians—Theodoric makes himself master of Italy—founds the Ostrogoth dynasty, which lasts for sixty years—Ostrogoths speedily master Sicily, Dalmatia, Noricum, Pannonia, and the two provinces of Rhætia 493

A.D.

Clovis, after the battle of Tolbiac, is baptized on Christmas-day with 3,000 followers—great blow to Arianism in Gaul 496

The sister of Clovis marries the king of Ostrogoths—he is also strengthened by alliance with the Armorican Gauls, who have hitherto remained independent—Salic law re-established 497

Arian Visigoths in southern Gaul persecute Catholics, who invoke aid from the Franks 498

Franks assail the Burgundians upon religious grounds 500

Franks make a temporary truce with Visigoths at Amboise 504

Franks attack Visigoths, whose king, Alaric II., not waiting for the Italian Ostrogoths, is vanquished and killed at Vouglé, near Poitiers 507

Franks joined by Burgundians, gain Toulouse from Visigoths, but driven back by aid of Italian Ostrogoths at Arles—Franks settle at Paris—receive embassy from Constantinople 508

Visigoths, after losing Toulouse, make Narbonne their capital—Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths, really rules both nations .. 509

Franks and Burgundians again defeated by Ostrogoths at Arles 510

Death of Clovis—four Frank kingdoms: capitals, Metz, Soissons, Paris, and Orleans—each have part of Aquitaine not yet entirely conquered—Theodoric still rules both nations at Arles, and restores Roman prefecture 511

Justin emperor..... 518

Arian counter-persecution by Theodoric—death of Symmachus and Boëthius 524

Clodomir, king of Orleans, killed fighting Burgundians—partition of realm between the two brothers, Childebert (Paris), Clotaire (Soissons)—Theodoric dies—Visigoths and Ostrogoths again divide—Rhone the boundary 526

Lombards settle in Pannonia (remain forty-two years) 527

Order of St. Benedict instituted 528

Justinian code published (Institutes and Digest, 533) 529

Thierry, king of Austrasian Franks, conquers Thuringia—revolution among the Vandals—Gelimer king 530

War between Franks and Visigoths, on account of the Visigoth queen, a Frank 531

Visigoth capital transferred by Theudes south of Pyrenees—encourages Franks to devastation 533

End of Burgundian kingdom—partition by the Franks (Gondemar last king)—Gelimer and the Vandals defeated by Belisarius—Africa a Roman province—internal quarrels in the Ostrogoth royal family 534

Justinian courts the Franks, wishing to conquer Italy—expedition sent against Ostrogoths to Sicily 535

Greeks in Italy—Belisarius conquers Rome and Naples—Ostrogoth king Vitiges..... 536

A.D.

Vitiges, after vain attempts on Rome, shuts himself up in Ravenna 538

First passage of a Frank army over the Alps—Theudebert, the Austrasian, ravages the country—attacks both Greeks and Ostrogoths 539

Vitiges in Ravenna surrenders to Belisarius 539

Franks cross the Pyrenees, hoping in Spain to plunder the Visigoths, as their fellows in Italy plundered the Ostrogoths—Childebert and Clotaire 542

Totila, the new Ostrogoth king, defeats the Greek army in absence of Belisarius 542

Next year captures Naples 543

Theudebert again attacks Italy and Sicily—forms a combination with Totila against the Greeks—Totila a fifth time sacks Rome, pulling down much wall 546

Belisarius sent again into Italy—retakes and rebuilds Rome (walls)—recalled 547

Austrasian Franks confirmed in occupation of basin of the Rhone by Justinian 548

Assassination of Visigoth king Theudes 548

Totila again makes himself master of Rome—he does not sack it, wishing to make it his capital—foundation of Poland by the Slave Lech 549

Narses again for the sixth time lays siege to Rome—Totila dies—Rome occupied by Greeks—Justinian attacks Visigoths—obtains part of eastern coast 552

Narses is now entire master of Italy since defeat of Gothic king Teias—Exarchate 553

Franks summoned across the Alps both by Greeks and Ostrogoths—two armies cross—wasted by disease and Narses—Verona and Brescia, last Ostrogoth strongholds surrender—laws of Justinian enforced through Italy—Athanagilda, Visigoth king, makes capital at Toledo 554

War between Franks (Clotaire I.) and Saxons—Clotaire king of Austrasia only 555

The death of Childebert, leaving only daughters, makes his brother Clotaire king of all the Frank states—Paris, capital—Frank gold money circulates at Constantinople 558

The Bulgarians approach and devastate the Empire 559

The sons of Clotaire, as heretofore those of Clovis, make a four-fold division of the kingdom of the Franks—same capitals, but Gontram, king of Orleans, rules over Burgundians 561

The Avars, a Hunnish tribe, invade Austrasian Gaul 562

Death of Belisarius and Justinian—Empire left strongly defended with forts, &c.—Sueves become Roman Catholics 565

The Lombards, aided by the Avars, crush the Gepidæ—Alboin marries Rosamond, daughter of king of Gepidæ; he is nephew of

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